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A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
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Whoever thinks a faultless book to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
Pope's Essay on Criticism.

particulars perhaps may not be executed to his satisfaction, or be agreeable to his ideas.

The proper method of using this Book profitably.

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As many of these Prayers are to be considered rather as suggesting materials for prayer, than as set forms always to be used without any alteration, variations may sometimes be necessary according to the capacity, disposition, and state of the person for whose benefit they are proposed.

The *Helps for Conversation and Examination* are likewise to be considered as suggesting materials, and not always to be used exactly as they here stand : for they are designed as sketches, on which the minister who visits the sick (or any one else) may enlarge, add some things, or omit others, according to circumstances ; of which he will judge for himself. I have therefore considered this publication chiefly as *helps for conversation* ; and that by these *helps* some might occasionally be assisted in their religious discourse with the sick or others, and benefited themselves in their retirements by a serious meditation on the subjects most suitable to their present state.

It is not in its own nature a work merely to be once read, and then laid aside, but to be frequently referred to, well considered, and weighed with great care ; so that the readers may become thoroughly masters of its contents, especially of those parts of it which relate to particular circumstances :

Nocturna versate manu versate diurna.

It is indeed principally intended (as I have before observed) for the benefit of the sick ; yet I presume it may be an assistant to many others ; and I should hope, that no reader will be so deficient in candour as to discard the whole, because some

well, that this reprove may end in pardon and eternal life.

God forbid that he should now live as if he should never see death; but may he possess his soul with such serious thoughts of another world, as shall excite him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; (Mark xii. 30.) making God the end of all his actions, wishes, and pursuits: and thus giving all diligence in the great work of salvation, that he may at last be found of the Lord in peace, and may die filled with the lively hopes of more durable enjoyments than those he shall leave at his departure from this transitory scene of things. Hear, O Lord, hear these our humble petitions, answer them, own and accept us in thy Son Jesus Christ, through whom we offer up all our worship. . Amen.



EVERY MAN'S ASSISTANT
AND THE
SICK MAN'S FRIEND.

3049
BY
SIR J. STONHOUSE, BART. M. D.

(Formerly of St. John's College, Oxford,)

RECTOR OF GREAT AND LITTLE CHEVEREL, WILTS.

Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him who was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. *Job iv. 3, 4.*

As one condemn'd to leap a precipice,
Who sees before his eyes the depth below,
Stops short, and looks about for some kind shrub
To break his dreadful fall; so I look here
For friendly aid against the fears of death. *Dryden.*

NINTH EDITION.

OXFORD,
PRINTED BY W. BAXTER,
FOR LAW AND WHITTAKER, 13, AVE MARIA LANE,
LONDON.
1818.

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME 31. PART 1. 1901.

CONTENTS.
PAGES.
The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 31, Part 1, 1901.

THE JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
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PAGES.
The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 31, Part 1, 1901.

TO THE
REV. TIMOTHY STONHOUSE, M. A.
OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS INSCRIBED
AS A MARK OF PARENTAL REGARD,
BY HIS
AFFECTIONATE FATHER,
JAMES STONHOUSE.

In the Monthly Review for April, 1798, *The Sick Man's Friend* is thus noticed :

The writer of this useful manual is already known to the world as the author of several pieces on subjects of practical religion and morality, which are judiciously adapted to promote a spirit of piety among the lower classes of mankind. He speaks of this work, on account of his declining years, as his last attempt to serve the interest of religion ; and both in the design and execution, it is worthy of its pious and benevolent author, and cannot fail of being highly acceptable to religious readers. It contains much excellent advice, both to the sick, and to those who attend upon them, and provides meditations and devotional exercises for persons of every character and condition, especially in a time of sickness.

Also the following Character is given of it in a Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend, who permitted the insertion of it here :

There is no book I am so often reading as this. It always lies on my table ; it has been my companion in travelling ; it is by my bedside in sickness. I can read a little in this when I can read nothing else. It is therefore a very useful manual to me, and will be so, I apprehend, to every sincere Christian, being, as it were, the anatomy of the heart. It will furnish excellent materials for addressing the conscience, for directing any one to judge of his own spiritual state, and for conversing with others experimentally, which is the very life and soul of Christian conversation. It moreover requires to be repeatedly read with much attention, and frequent reflection, in order to become well acquainted with the variety of important matter it contains ; and it should be familiarized to the mind of every reader, till he is wrought up by it to some degree of that temper, which it was evidently designed to promote.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

THIS volume of instruction and consolation was intended to be a spiritual assistant in health, and a faithful friend in sickness; and, as there is now a demand for another edition, I have revised it, and endeavoured, by some alterations and additions, to render it less unworthy a further reception.

In the preface to the first edition, published in March, 1788, I acknowledged, that in the course of the work I had extracted from different writers such passages, as I thought most conducive to my purpose. I observed likewise, that as my appearance in the pulpit, my attendance on the sick, and life itself, drew near a conclusion, I thought I could not employ some of my time more usefully than in such a publication, which was really much wanted, as there were but few treatises on the subject; and even these did not appear to me sufficiently to answer the ends. I wished therefore to see a design of this nature executed more fully, which I have herein attempted.

It is a great satisfaction to me that it has been so well received by the public, and that it has been useful not only to the sick, and to some of their attendants, but particularly to my own son, and to others of the younger clergy, who have not been much conversant in the important duty of talking on spiritual subjects either with the sick, or others.

To be regardless of a future state, and unmindful of a sick bed, is, I fear, a common and fatal mistake ; for we are all too apt to put such thoughts far from us. To avoid therefore this dangerous rock, on which so many have split, and shipwrecked their hopes of heaven, I must observe, that there is an habitual and an actual preparation for death and eternity. The habitual preparation is providing "oil for our lamps," or grace for our souls ; and is the business of our whole lives in the days of health and vigour. The actual preparation is "the trimming of our lamps," or the exercise of these graces ; and this is particularly expected from us in the time of sickness, and at the hour of death.

It is much to be wished, that mankind in general were more desirous of the good offices of Ministers, and of others, who are seriously disposed, than they too generally appear to be. Some however, especially sinners under conviction, and real Christians, are very thankful for them. Now in order to suggest a few leading circumstances, by which others may be benefited, I have proposed several

Helps for self-examination, by which their consciences may be searched either by themselves, their Ministers, or others; I have suggested various consolations, and I have added suitable Prayers to these Helps for conversation, which may be used at different times, as the occasion shall require. Spiritual conversation, whether with such as are in sickness, or in health, should frequently be varied according to their different dispositions. The heads of these conversations were most of them originally penned from time to time by way of memorandum after the first visit had been paid; and altered suitable to the person I attended. The discretion of the Minister, or of any other, who converses on spiritual subjects, must supply whatever deficiencies he may here find; for it is impracticable to prescribe helps, or devise any method, which shall answer all the emergencies relative to the sick, or to any other person, with whom we may be required to converse on the state of the soul, and "the things which accompany salvation." (Heb. vi. 9.)

I am aware of the folly and danger of endeavouring to deceive the sick by a smooth discourse on a false foundation; which was so much the practice of the Jewish priests, that God declared by the prophet Jeremiah, "they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." (Jer. vi. 14.) This practice is too prevalent in our days.

Some who visit the sick are more solicitous to please than to profit them, and to gain the good word of the by-standers, than to run the risk of incurring their censure; which they probably might do, were they to search the heart deeply, and to be faithful in the discharge of so important a duty. I have therefore addressed myself closely to the conscience in a plain and practical manner; knowing that a declaration of simple and unaffected truth is the best proof of our regard for any one with whom we converse on his spiritual concerns; especially with the sick, or dying.

I am very sensible of the imperfections of what is here submitted to the public eye; yet there are none, I hope, so great, but what will be overlooked, when it is considered, that the only motive for its publication was the good of my fellow-creatures, particularly of some of my parishioners, when I can no longer be their instructor.

I have now within a few months completed my seventy-eighth year. May this my last attempt as an author be blessed, and afford help and comfort to many, who may seriously read it under the various calamities of life, and fortify them and myself, especially on the bed of sickness, and at the hour of death.

JAMES STONHOUSE.

HOT-WELLS, near BRISTOL,
March 20, 1794.

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HELPS

FOR

CONVERSATION WITH THE SICK, OR OTHERS.

N. B. The considerations here suggested have principally a reference to the sick, and are addressed to them under that circumstance; yet, allowing in particular passages for this necessary mode of expression, they may with equal propriety be applied to the use of the generality in their spiritual concerns.

SECTION I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.

Preparatory Helps for one who visits the Sick, and converses spiritually with others.

SOME preparation before such an one visits the sick is very proper: he should therefore consider what kind of conversation is likely to be most necessary and suitable to the person he visits*.

It would be advisable to have in readiness a collection of Scripture expressions, adapted to the support and comfort of the afflicted, which may easily

* Monsieur Ostervald (a French Protestant Minister, and Professor of Divinity at Neufchatel, in Switzerland) has well observed, that it is something strange that Ministers should take so much care to prepare their discourses for the pulpit, and take so little care to prepare for what they should say to the sick, or how to conduct their visits to them, though it is one of the most difficult and most important offices in the ministry.

Ostervald du Gouvernement de l'Eglise, p. 307.

be collected from Bishop Gastrel's Christian Institutes, and Dr. Clark on the Promises of Scripture. From either of these he may choose such as are most applicable to the case of the person with whom he is to converse.

He should adapt himself to his or her understanding, as well as to the circumstances of the case, by making such observations, and using such expressions, as he knows are most familiar and agreeable. But he must take care to explain any phrases he has reason to think are not rightly understood.

Let his behaviour and conversation be very free, friendly, close, tender, and compassionate.

He should place himself in the condition of the person before him; and then consider in what manner he would wish a minister, or friend, to behave to him in these very circumstances.

Whilst he is tender he should be faithful, and have a respect to the approbation of his conscience afterwards. He, who is a minister of God, must not sacrifice the cause of truth and godliness to a false shame or tenderness.

When he prays with the sick, his prayer should be short, serious, and adapted as much as may be to the state of such an one, and to the danger of his disease. In the visitation of the sick, or in a friendly conversation with any others who want spiritual advice, there is great need of piety, fidelity, and wisdom, in order to sound their consciences, to give them the requisite advice, and to pray with them and for them.

“One of the chief parts of a Minister's duty,” (says Bp. Burnet in his Pastoral Care, page 173,) “is visiting the sick: which is not to be done barely “when he is sent for; he is to go as soon as he “hears any of his parishioners are ill.”

None who have the care of souls should shun this work of labour and love from a fear, that if

he should go voluntarily, his visit would be considered as an intrusion; and that so far from being acceptable, it might defeat the good intention of it to the sick person. Nay, that he may not seem to feign excuses, or seek pretences to avoid taking any notice of the sick, it may be prudent perhaps to pay one visit of his own accord: and, if he shall perceive that it is not well taken, and that he is not likely to do any good, he may then stay away without any mark of negligence or disgrace. However, in this respect every man's own conscience will direct him.

Remarks on the difficulty of acting in many circumstances relating to the Sick.

It is a most difficult and awful thing to act in many circumstances, which arise on an attendance on the sick. The sick person may deceive himself: a Minister may be deceived. It will therefore be proper to inquire

What are his hopes of salvation?

On what are they founded?

How they operate in languishing and dying circumstances?

Here leave him room to talk; only interpose proper questions. Take notice what marks there are of ignorance, or mistake, in what he says. Drop proper cautions concerning the deceitfulness of man's heart, and the danger of mistake in this case.

Reading the Office for the Visitation of the Sick is but a very small part of a Minister's duty. He must go further. It is of the utmost importance. When he visits any one who is sick, he should remember what is recorded in the book of Ezekiel, "His blood will I require at thy hand, &c." (See Ezek. iii. 18—21.)

He should direct the sick (1.) to examine the state of their souls as to faith and practice; (2.) and to

prepare for death and judgment. They should prepare by prayer for God's help; by using their own endeavours; by inquiring how far their faith and practice have agreed with the Gospel, with their baptismal covenant and Christian profession; by judging and condemning themselves for all their faults with that hearty repentance and true faith, to which God has promised forgiveness of sins through the merits of his Son, that their sins may be blotted out by Divine mercy and the Redeemer's blood, and their pardon sealed in heaven before they go hence, and be no more seen.

He who visits the sick, if he should not be sufficiently acquainted with them, should make what prudent inquiries he can of others, who are well acquainted with them, what their character and lives have been. He should inquire likewise of themselves

What their views have been, and what they now are?

What are their views of sin: of their own guilt and danger; of Christ and the Gospel; of the terms of acceptance; of eternity?

Whether they have been accustomed to secret prayer, and how they have conducted it?

Such other questions may be added, as may be suitable to their state of mind and circumstances.

There are some who through ignorance cannot, or stupidity will not, give proper answers to such questions. They will assent to what is said, but drop nothing of themselves by which one can form a judgment of their state, as I have frequently experienced to my great concern in an attendance on the sick and dying. This is the most perplexing part of a Minister's work. Allowances however must be made for a bad education, small advantages, and their being unaccustomed to talk on these subjects. It is better to err perhaps on the suspicious or doubtful side, than to give flattering hopes.

Some may die in transports and raptures, and yet be far from making a good end. Deep humility, repenting, and believing, are surer evidences of salvation*, than confidence and transports. Notwithstanding the preceding caution not to give flattering hopes, the attendants on the sick should be very careful to animate and encourage those who appear to have been sincere in religion, though their capacities are weak.

An enquiry into the temporal affairs of the Sick.

It may sometimes be necessary to take notice of this, especially if the sickness be of an alarming nature. Advise therefore a proper disposition of their affairs to be immediately made by will, if it be not already done. This perhaps may be of great importance to their relations, and others. If there be a reasonable suspicion that they have obtained any part of their property by fraud, urge them to restitution, as absolutely necessary. If they refuse to do this, little can be done farther than by praying for them.

* See the latter part of the ninety-seventh of the folio edition of Abp. Tillotson's Sermons, on Ecclesiastes viii. 12.

SECTION II.

HELPS FOR CONVERSING WITH THE SICK IN DIFFERENT STATES, AND UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

Conversations on their spiritual state.

AS to their spiritual concerns, advice must be given according to the state of the sick, whether bad, doubtful, or good.

Helps for conversing with one in a bad state.

1. Endeavour to convince him that his state is very dangerous indeed. In doing this, the arguments should be rested chiefly on the authority of Scripture, with his own representation of the case. If you find any one sin prevalent in his character, then rest your charge particularly on that. If a drunkard, liar, swearer, sabbath-breaker, &c. bring such texts as will shut him out of the kingdom of heaven. Represent the aggravation of his sin, his many religious advantages, &c.

2. Seem rather to lament over such an unhappy person than to upbraid him. Severity may produce hatred; and he will not care to have any thing more to do with you.

3. Be solicitous that you do not drive him into despair, especially when you see him begin to be awakened. While unawakened, urge the most dreadful things. Represent the wrath of God as inexpressibly dreadful. Take images from present circumstances; such as the burnings of a fever, tossings of a restless night, &c. how much more in hell! But (as I said before) do not drive him to despair, nor yet raise him up to vain and unreasonable confidences. Represent the mercy of God in Christ to penitent sinners; mention proper texts of comfort; and let him see it is your design

to bring him to a better state, which makes you thus represent his danger.

4. When you see something which looks like true repentance, be not too ready to admit personal consolation any otherwise than as conditional. There is great danger in authoritative absolution. Let him know, that, if he does not rest his soul on the mercy of God in Christ, there will be no room for hope. Remind him of what treachery he has found in his own heart, and what he has seen in others, who have appeared hopeful on a sick bed, but after their recovery returned to their former courses.

One of the chief cares of a Minister about the sick (says Bishop Burnet, page 176, of the Pastoral Care) ought to be to exact of them solemn promises of a renovation of life, in case God should raise them up again; and these promises ought to be demanded not only in general words, but if they have been guilty of any scandalous disorders, or any other ill practices, there ought to be special promises made with relation to those. And on the recovery of such persons, the Minister ought to put them in mind of their engagements, and use all the due freedom of admonition and reproof on their breaking loose from them. In such a case he ought to leave a terrible denunciation of the judgments of God on them, and so at least the Minister acquits himself.

Other helps for conversing with one in a bad state.

1. You should pray to God beforehand, that you may be enabled to say something which may be the means of awakening him to a proper sense of his danger.

2. When you enter the chamber, let him see that you are concerned for him, and that you are more sensible of his danger than he is of his own.

3. Then, in order to bring him to a proper sense

of his state and danger, 1. put some close questions to him relating to the holy and righteous nature of God; 2. to his infinite hatred of sin; 3. to the absolute impossibility of being happy hereafter but in his favour; 4. the certainty of future judgment, "where God will render to every man according to his works;" and, 5. the unspeakable importance of the soul's being safe for eternity.

4. Then instruct him not to deceive himself with vain hopes; but be willing to see the truth of his case, as it is represented to him in the unerring word of God, and, though he may shut his eyes against the danger, there is no possibility of escaping it.

5. If his distemper is likely to be fatal, let him know it. Tell him, that all which can be done to escape everlasting misery must be done immediately; that there is as yet some hope (though small) that this may possibly be done; that on this present time depends his future condition for ever.

6. If by these means his conscience should be awakened, and you observe some genuine relentings of heart, take that occasion to assist its workings, enforce its reproofs, and urge its convictions, till you see something like a true penitential remorse.

7. Then earnestly pray with him and for him, that God would continue to give him a just sense of his sin and danger, and that his grace and spirit may come on these convictions, till they end in a real change of heart.

8. Then take your leave of him in a tender and affectionate manner; not without giving him some hope, that, if the same feeling and penitent frame should continue, there may be mercy in reserve for him; but beg him, whilst he has the use of his reason, not to omit any opportunity of praying earnestly to God for mercy through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ.

9. In your next visit, (which should be soon after

this,) if you find him penitent, exhort him to glorify God by making an ample confession of his sins in private, with all their heinous aggravations, and not be afraid to see the worst of himself.

10. If his penitential sorrow still continues, you may begin to administer the consolations of the Gospel so far as you may have reason to believe him sincere.

Helps for conversing with one in a doubtful state.

1. Exhort him to a diligent search into his own heart, in the words of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ps. cxxxix. 23 and 24. Represent the importance of knowing the true state of the case, and especially inculcate the deceitfulness of the heart.

2. Incline him to be willing to know and fear the worst. Represent that he cannot make his case better by entertaining false hopes; shew him the necessity of renewed acts of repentance, and in proportion to the doubtfulness of the case urge these things more strongly.

3. Give him your own judgment plainly and seriously. Remember particularly to pray to God that he would lead him into the knowledge of himself.

Other Helps for conversing with one in a doubtful state.

In your conversation with such an one you cannot be too cautious. If there be no apparent danger of death,

1. Endeavour to give him just notions of a particular Providence, that though men do not so often attend to it as they ought, yet it is certainly evident both from Scripture and reason, that whatever befalls every man on earth, is under the im-

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mediate direction of Providence. And as to his affliction in particular, persuade him to regard and consider it as coming from the hand of God.

2. Then discourse on the wisdom and goodness of God in sending these occasional rebukes of Providence, which (whatever we think) are sent for the best ends. Afflictions are the physic of the soul, designed to purify and purge it.

3. Under this view of things, press on him the exercise of patience, submission, and a total resignation to the Divine will; and direct him to look on the present dispensation (though grievous) as sent in mercy to him, and as what may hereafter produce the most excellent effects.

4. Tell him, that in the best of men there are sins and follies sufficient to justify the severest dispensations of God's providence; that many good Christians have suffered worse; and what reason he has to be thankful, that his case is not still more calamitous.

5. Remind him of many mercies mixed with the present afflictions.

6. If it should please God to restore him, exhort him faithfully to concur with the design of this visitation, by his constant endeavour to amend that for which his conscience now smites him.

But if there should be apparent symptoms of approaching death,

1. Exhort him seriously to review his past life, and to call to mind the most remarkable transgressions of it; for which he should now greatly humble his soul before God, and sincerely renew his repentance.

2. Endeavour that his repentance may be sincere and unfeigned, to make him sensible of the evil and guilt of sin, from its contrariety to the holy nature of God, and shun the inevitable ruin to which it exposes the soul.

3. When he is thus humble and penitent, revive

him with the consolations of the Gospel, the amazing compassion and goodness of God to a world of sinners, in sending his Son to redeem them by his death, and the merits of the Redeemer's sufferings, whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

4. Then open to him in a plain and easy manner the Gospel method of salvation by Jesus Christ, and the only terms of pardon there proposed, namely, repentance, faith, and renewed obedience. And tell him that salvation in Christ consists in the lively exercise of love to him, a desire to serve and please him, and an humble dependence on his merits for justification and pardon, and in a deep self-abhorrence for his sin.

5. Remind him to settle his affairs as well as he can, and then to think no more of worldly things.

6. Leave him with some suitable texts of Scripture, which you apprehend most applicable to his state.

Helps for conversing with one in a good state.

If you have reason to believe that he is a real Christian, your work will not be difficult: it may be pleasant and useful; and you may possibly receive more advantage from him than he does from you. For the graces of a real Christian are at such a time commonly most lively, and the tongue very faithful to the sentiments of the heart, so that you will presently see what it is that lies mostly on his mind, and your present business will be (1) to administer consolation; and (2) if he has any doubts to remove them.

1. The consolation may be taken from his past experience. Direct him to look back to the goodness of God to him, and the sensible experience he has had of his love and presence. Bid him think what God has done for his soul, and thence draw David's conclusion, "Because the Lord has

Helps for conversing with one who is sick, in order to discover to which of the foregoing states he may belong.

Consider and enquire his general character, especially from those who are best acquainted with him; and, above all, from religious persons. As, for instance, from a pious parent for a child; or from a master for a servant.

Get what information you can from himself; especially if you have good reason on the whole to think ill of him. If you have only a general reason to think he is wrong, without great immoralities to charge upon him, then be so much more solicitous to gather something from his own mouth, on which to form a plain and awakening address. You may ask the sick person seriously whether he has any thing in particular to say to you with regard to the state of his soul.

And if he has, you may then say to his relations or attendants, that perhaps it might be more agreeable to him if he was left alone with you.

Put to him some of the following questions which are the distinguishing characteristics of a good man; and by which he will see and acknowledge his own defects.

Have you been used to secret prayer?

Have you attended public worship?

Have you been accustomed to read the Scripture? and, if you have, do you delight in it, and has it been profitable to you?

Has sin ever been your grief and burden?

What have you done to get rid of it?

Have you struggled against temptations, and strove to avoid them?

Have you endeavoured to subdue the corruptions of your own heart?

What are your hopes, and on what foundation built?

Are your thoughts of the new covenant of grace comfortable, and are you grateful for them?

Have you considered Christ as your Prophet to teach you, your Priest to intercede for you, and as your King to subdue the dominion of sin in your heart? There is no room for hope but in and through him.

Have you enquired after the remedies for the particular diseases of your own mind? and have you endeavoured (so far as you have understood) to make use of such remedies?

Have you found a cure gradually going on?

Have you endeavoured to govern your thoughts and affections as well as your outward conduct?

Do you grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?
2 Pet. iii. 18.

Helps for conversing with a Formalist.

No part of the ministerial office, perhaps, is so difficult to discharge as a conversation with a Formalist, for he is generally too self-righteous to receive any profit either from the pulpit, or in private. The method, which has sometimes had the desired effect, is to ask him a few serious questions as to inward and heart religion, secret prayer, and the government of the thoughts; and to say, that if he desire any assistance from you as a Christian minister, he must allow you to deal plainly with him. Shew him some texts of Scripture which describe inward religion, and the necessity of making heart work of it*. Entreat him to consi-

* Such as the following, "With the heart [not with the understanding only] man believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation." Rom. x. 10.

"The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint." Isa. i. 5.

"This people draw near with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me: and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men." Isaiah xxix. 13.

der with the greatest sincerity what you have said to him, and to pray earnestly that God would give his blessing, and so direct and rule his heart, that he may be truly prepared, through the merits and intercession of Christ, for life, or for death.

Helps for conversing with any one, whether in sickness or in health, (especially with a Formalist,) on the spirituality and extent of the Ten Commandments.

It may be very proper, on many occasions, in order to convince them of sin, to enquire whether they have rightly understood the spirituality and extent of God's Commandments, by which they will soon see whether they have ever considered the Commandments spiritually, as extending to the thoughts and intents of the heart, and whether, though they may not have broken them perhaps by notorious sins, they have kept them in the spiritual sense. But still they should be told that they have committed much sin, and done much injury, not only to others, but especially to their own souls, by great, numberless, and daily offences against the holy law of God; nay, that they have broken every one of them; and this indeed we all confess every Sunday; for, when we hear the Minister repeat the Commandments, we make answer after each of them, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." Our calling for mercy is plainly acknowledging ourselves guilty.

The first Commandment.] This Commandment requires a disposition and conduct suited to the relation in which we all stand to the Lord our God. Now whatever deviates from it is sin, and the effect of man's fall. Examine then whether you have never loved any worldly thing more than God and

"Keep thine heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. iv. 23.)

See Ps. xiv. 3. Rom. iii. 10. to the same effect. Ps. cxxxix. 23. Matt. vi. 21. Matt. xv. 19.

his favour. Whether you have never feared any thing more than his displeasure, so as to neglect a known duty rather than draw on yourself some temporal inconvenience. If so, then this was a breach of the first Commandment; for our Lord's words are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Matt. xxii. 37.

The second Commandment.] This Commandment respects the manner of expressing the devotion of the heart; and therefore whatever in this service has been unbecoming, such as wandering thoughts, carelessness, and ignorance, as well as using images, is a breach of this second Commandment. So also is a neglect of God's service. Here I suppose you cannot pretend to be not guilty. Consequently your coming to church and the sacrament in a careless and unthinking manner deserves rather to be reckoned among your sins, than trusted to for justification before God. This is a breach of the second Commandment. Who will pretend to assert that there is less guilt in loving gold; or preferring pleasure before God, than in bowing down to a graven image of wood or of stone? Whatever we love more than God is our idol; and unless we understand the Commandments as they are read every Sunday in this manner, how can we with any meaning join in the response after each Commandment, "Lord, have mercy upon us," conscious as we must be, that we have never literally bowed down to a graven image, nor committed murder.

The third Commandment.] This Commandment forbids the use of God's name irreverently, profanely, or in fraud, dissimulation, or hypocrisy. It forbids all appeals to God in conversation with such expressions as "the Lord knows," &c. when the matter is neither true nor important: or when we use the words God, Lord, or Christ, without ne-

cessity, seriousness, or reverence. Examine **then** whether you have not frequently taken the Lord's name in vain, using it needlessly, and without an awful sense of his majesty, of whom you spake! This you have done perhaps ten thousand times in your life. This therefore is a breach of the third Commandment.

The fourth Commandment.] Whenever you have absented yourself from public worship on the Sabbath without a necessary hindrance, suffered worldly thoughts to unfit you for God's service; done or compelled others to do worldly business on that day, which might have been done on another; travelled unnecessarily, or spent the sacred day in idleness, vain recreations, trifling visits, or other actions of sin and folly; neglecting to instruct your children and servants, and not devoting the whole to God, by reading, hearing, prayer, meditation, and useful conversation, you have profaned the Lord's day. This is a breach of the fourth Commandment.

These four first Commandments contain our duty towards God, and make what is called the First Table. The substance of which is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Matt. v. 28. But you come short of this whenever you have not acted to the glory of God. Now what can even the best of us think of his innocence, in regard to the duties of this First Table?

Hence it will appear, that what the moral law requires is extensive, spiritual, reasonable, and beneficial; yet it must be acknowledged to be entirely contrary to the disposition of our hearts, and different from the tenour of our lives. We all therefore need mercy, redemption, and a renovation to holiness, that we may be induced to please God, and be made fit for heaven.

The other six Commandments make what is called the Second Table, and contain our duty to-

wards our neighbour, as explained by our Lord in his Sermon on the mount. How can any of us presume to say that we have obeyed them?

The fifth Commandment.] All the superior and inferior relations have their several reciprocal duties, which may be referred to this Commandment. All parts therefore of your behaviour which are unsuitable to the situation in which Providence has placed you, irreverence, and proud censuring of your superiors, and all unkind and injurious treatment of those who are beneath you, are certain breaches of the fifth Commandment.

The sixth Commandment.] This Commandment requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves, in regard to his person and life. What then shall we think of the accursed slave-trade, which will surely bring vengeance on this land if much longer tolerated! Want of compassion, causeless anger, and especially injurious language, is accounted by our Lord a degree of murder, Matt. v. 22. Duelling, on whatever occasion, is an atrocious breach of this Commandment. "Thou shalt do no murder" is a commandment, which to mention even on a suspicion that you were guilty of it, might at first startle you, and rouse your indignation. But what says the Scripture? "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." John iii. 14. "Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Verse 15. See likewise Matt. v. 22. Consider the extensive meaning of this Commandment, and then say whence proceed quarrels, wrath, strife, and the like! whence but from murderous principles in the heart!

The seventh Commandment.] They sin against this Commandment who are adulterers or fornicators: they who by wanton gestures, lascivious looks, loose dress, obscene discourse, amorous songs, &c. tempt or betray themselves, or others, to sin. Our Lord tells us, that wantonness in the

eye and heart is esteemed adultery (Matt. v. 28.) in the sight of God. Did you never know an impure desire? Did you never indulge a lascivious thought? How can purity of body and soul, in secret as well as before men, which is the end of this Commandment, preside in the heart, from which flow the impure streams of filthy communication and indecent jesting, though they may be conveyed in seemingly decent terms? These things are breaches of the seventh Commandment.

The eighth Commandment.] “Thou shalt not steal.” Let us pause awhile, and consider its extent and spirituality. It is not only the robber and the thief, who take away something confessedly mine, who are guilty of the breach of this Commandment; but he is also guilty who takes an unjust advantage in buying and selling. He who uses a light weight, or a short measure, is a thief before God. He who borroweth, and payeth not again, when it is in his power to do it. He who buys or sells commodities, which have not paid the legal duties. In short, all sorts of conduct towards others in money matters, which we would not have others practise towards us, are the sinful fruits of a dishonest principle in the heart, which principle stands condemned in the spirit, though not in the letter, of the eighth Commandment.

The ninth Commandment.] Envy of others’ praise runs counter to the spirit of this Commandment, which requires truth, fidelity, candour, and caution; with a disposition to honour what is honourable in all men, and to be as tender of their reputation as we would reasonably expect them to be of ours, and our feelings will instruct us how far this rule will carry us. Taking away another’s good name, on which perhaps his interest, usefulness, trade, and livelihood may depend, is contrary to this Commandment; as are all evil-speaking, rash censuring, hinting faults, hesitating dislike, repeat-

ing stories injurious to his character, and secretly raising suspicions of him without foundation.

The tenth Commandment.] We are commanded not to covet any thing which is our neighbour's. This restriction is placed as a fence of all the rest. It comprises the utmost spirituality of the Law; and it is a perpetual confutation of all those systems, by which the outward, gross crime is considered as the only violation of the Commandment. We are not so much as to desire any thing God forbids. All murmuring and discontent, envy, and greediness, are sins forbidden by this Commandment, especially the sinfulness of gaming. "Thou shalt not covet." How few are the consciences wounded (as they ought to be) with a sense of guilt for the transgression of this Commandment. A thousand irregular desires pass through the heart, and may lodge there continually: too many live in the violation of this law, accounting themselves pure and without offence. St. Paul was of another mind; "I had not known lust, says he, unless the law had declared, Thou shalt not covet." From the use the Apostle makes of this tenth Commandment, it may clearly be seen, that the Law takes notice of the heart, as well as of the outward actions. Hence also it is plain, that much guilt may be contracted, which does not appear to any human eye.

✚ If the sick person be very weak, converse only on the four first Commandments, and defer the remainder till the next visit.

N. B. Whoever has particularly and seriously thus considered the ten Commandments, will be far from the vanity of the promising young man in the Gospel, who confidently asserted, "All these have I kept from my youth." (Matt. xix. 20.) Perhaps he had as to the letter, but not spiritually. An humbling sight of our sins is the first step to the kingdom of God. We should make a confession, that we

are guilty, and this should be succeeded by an earnest exclamation for their pardon, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" Let us meditate on their number, deserts, aggravation, and effects, and then add this to the other petition, "Incline our hearts, O Lord, to keep thy laws." Let us renew our baptismal covenant, and follow the good inclinations it may please God to work in us. May our prayers for divine aid be hearty and sincere!

Helps for conversing with one who is ignorant, in order to enforce on him proper notions of religion.

As you seem unacquainted with religion, I wish to give you some right notions of it, particularly

Of the attributes of God, as ever present—as all knowing—as all powerful—as all wise—as merciful and just.

Of the fall of man.

Of baptism, its privileges and obligations.

Of repentance, especially of repenting in time of health.

Of a death-bed repentance.

Of faith and works.

Of prayer, secret, family, and public.

Of a state of grace, and a state of nature.

Of the sacrament.

Of death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

On each of these I propose to converse with you from time to time, as opportunity may permit.

Helps for conversing with one that is careless and inconsiderate.

"Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Eccles. xi. 9. You should therefore consider well the baptismal covenant, wherein you have promised

1. To renounce what God has forbidden, namely, all the works of the Devil, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.

2. To believe what God has taught, namely, all the Articles of the Christian faith.

3. To practise what God has commanded, namely, to keep God's will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life.

Consider moreover the want of due reflection that has destroyed many; and remember that of the seed sown, only one part in four is represented as being productive. Think on the condition of the thoughtless, hardened, and worldly-minded, be alarmed at your own danger, and bring forth fruit.

Heaven is a gift, but conditions are required on our parts to receive it.

Fear the worst, that you may provide for the better. "Work out your salvation (says the Apostle) with fear and trembling."

Consider the many ways of miscarrying.

To feel nothing is a sign of spiritual death, not of a godly life.

Nothing can be hid from God, to whom all hearts are known.

If it be alleged that you have done no harm, permit me to ask you what are the good works you perform?

What is your love to God and Christ?

What is your zeal? What is your activity in the service of Christ? "Be zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 14.

You should consider your sins in general, and then enter into a particular examination of them.

How has your duty to God (the first duty) been performed, as well as (the second) your duty to man?

Have you lived soberly, righteously, and godly? Remember that though many are called, few are chosen, comparatively with those who are condemned.

Helps for conversation (founded on suitable texts) with backsliders; such as have left off prayer, public worship, and other religious duties.

1. You had better never have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it to turn from it. 2 Pet. ii. 21.

2. Remember whence you are fallen, repent, and do the first works; (Rev. ii. 5.) otherwise your case will be dreadful.

3. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. Prov. xiv. 14.

4. Beware of backsliding for the future.

5. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and he will heal your backslidings. Hos. xiv. 2, and 4.

Your soul by this backsliding is brought into a miserable state; yet (blessed be God!) your case is not desperate. Let me beseech you immediately to return to God by deep humiliation before him for so aggravated an offence; by renewed regard to the divine mercy in Christ; by an open profession of repentance, where your sin has given public offence; by frequently reviewing this unhappy fall for future caution; and by guarding against every tendency to a declension in religion.

Helps for conversation with one in his sickness who had disregarded religion, urging him to accept the terms of the Gospel, and assuring him of the forgiveness of his sins.

You have lived a worldly life, mindful only of earthly things, neglecting God and your salvation, and all the mercies offered you in the Gospel. Are you now, unfeignedly grieved for this? not only because it has brought you so near ruin, but also because it has displeased God, and deprived you of that holy and comfortable life, which you might all this while have lived, and endangered all your

hope of heaven. Do you so far relent that your heart is actually changed, so much changed, that you had rather lead an holy life on earth, and in the sight and enjoyment of God for ever, than to have all the pleasures and prosperity of this world? Do you hate your sins, loath yourselves for them, and truly desire to be made holy? Are you firmly resolved that, if God should restore you to health, you will lead a new life; that you will forsake your worldly maxims, and all your wilful sins; and set yourself in good earnest to learn the will of God, to call upon him daily, and make it your chief care to please him, and to save your immortal soul?

Are you willing for these ends to give yourself up absolutely now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as your reconciled Father, your Saviour, and your Sanctifier, to be sanctified, justified, and saved from your sins, and from the wrath of God, and to live to God in love and holiness? And are you willing to bind yourself to this by entering into a covenant with God, renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil?

Either your heart is willing and sincere in this resolution and covenant, or it is not: there is no hope that your sins should be pardoned, and your soul be saved, on any other or easier terms. And though God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners, it was never his intention to save the impenitent and unsanctified. But, if your heart unfeignedly consent to this covenant, I have the authority of Christ himself to tell you, that God will be your reconciled God and Father, that Christ will be your Saviour, that the Holy Spirit will be your Sanctifier and Comforter, that your soul shall be saved, and that you shall dwell in heaven with God for ever. God consented before you consented. He shewed his consent in purchasing, making, and offering you this covenant.

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Shew your unfeigned consent now by accepting and by giving up yourself unreservedly to him, and you have Christ's blood, spirit, and sacrament to seal it to you. Sin and the world have deceived you, but trust in Christ on the terms of the Gospel covenant, and he will never deceive you.

And now, alas! what pity is it, that a soul, which is in a miserable state, and must be lost for ever, if it have not help, (and speedy help too,) should be deprived of all this grace and glory, and only for want of repenting and consenting! What pity is it, that a soul, which is ready to go into another world, where mercy shall never more be offered, should rather stupidly go on to a place of torment, than return to God and his mercy! Do but truly repent and agree to this covenant, and all the mercies of it are certainly yours; God will be your God; and Christ, and the Spirit, and pardon, and heaven, and all are yours. Oh that the Lord may open your heart, and persuade you not to be undone and lost for ever for want of accepting the mercy which is here offered you.

And now I know it would be comfortable to you, if you could be fully assured that you are forgiven, and shall be saved. In a matter of such unspeakable importance, how joyful would a well-grounded certainty be to any man, who has the right use of his understanding? I am authorized therefore from the word of God to declare, that there is no cause of your doubting on his part, but only on your own. There is no doubt to be made whether God be merciful, nor whether Christ be a sufficient Saviour and sacrifice for your sins, nor whether the covenant be sure, and promise of pardon and salvation to all truly penitent believers be strong and unalterable. All the doubt is whether your faith and repentance be sincere, or not. And as for that, I can tell you how you may know it, and I will explain the truth to you, that I may

neither deceive you, nor unnecessarily discourage you.

1. If this repentance and change, which you now profess, and this covenant, which you have now made with God, proceed only from a present fear, and not from a changed renewed heart: 2. and if your resolutions be such, as would not bind you to lead an holy life, should you recover, but would be ineffectual to answer any good purpose; then it would be only a forced, hypocritical repentance, and would not save you, if you should die in that state.

1. But if your repentance and covenant proceed not only from present fear, but from a renewed heart, which now loves God, Christ, heaven, and holiness, and you would not relinquish the divine favour for all the riches and pleasures of the world: 2. and if this change of heart be such, as, should you recover, would excite and bind you to lead an holy life, and would not decline, or dwindle into an hypocritical formality, when the fright from sickness was over; then I can assure you from the word of God, that, if you die in such a state of repentance, you will certainly be saved.

Helps for a conversation (founded on suitable texts) with an awakened convinced sinner.

1. You should be thankful that there is room for hope. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

2. You should meditate frequently on the promises made to repentance, confession, and humiliation. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts iii. 19.)

3. You should endeavour to impress on your mind the instances of the acceptance and efficacy of repentance and humiliation; such as the conversion of the persecutor Paul; of the gaoler at

Philippi; and of the once profligate, but afterwards holy Corinthians. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isai. lv. 7.)

4. You should break off all your sins, and practise the duties you have neglected, especially prayer. "Cease to do evil: learn to do well." (Isaiah i. 16.)

5. But make no delay. "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iii. 7.)

Helps in general previous to a conversation with doubting, melancholy, and despairing Christians.

In conversing with these, it should be well considered what is the true source and original of this melancholy gloom, unreasonable fear, and groundless despair. Whether it arises from bodily disorders; from worldly losses and afflictions; from some grievous sin committed; from an excessive apprehension and timidity of spirit. The person himself may perhaps impute it to none of these causes, but either to God's desertion, or the "buffettings of Satan." (2 Cor. xii. 7.) But all these causes must be carefully distinguished and explained, for they are frequently mistaken: and, after this has been done, the advice given to them, and conversation with them, cannot be here mentioned distinctly, but must be according to the true source of their spiritual trouble. Some helps however for a general conversation with them are here pointed out.

Helps for conversation with one who is oppressed with many doubts and unreasonable fears.

You are too much dejected and doubtful concerning your salvation. He who is jealous of himself is always in the safest condition: the most

considerate and best prepared have fears, especially on a bed of sickness; and to fear nothing then is either a singular felicity, or a dangerous presumption. Comfort yourself with thinking on the terms of the Gospel; that it is a covenant of grace and mercy to all who seek it; that Jesus Christ came into the world to save penitent sinners; that he continues our advocate in heaven; that he daily intercedes for you; that the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; that there are different degrees of glory in heaven; that God has promised to hear prayer; that he assists us with his spirit; and his ministers, as it were, beseech us in Christ's stead to be reconciled to him; (2 Cor. v. 20.) that we are ordered to shew such a temper of forgiveness to others, that we may be animated to trust in the much more unbounded mercy of God to us. But those who have conversed with such persons, and heard their manner of evading every argument which could be suggested for their relief, must have had full conviction, that whatever is attempted in behalf of such pitiable objects, should be undertaken entirely in an humble dependence on the divine blessing; looking to that gracious and compassionate Redeemer, who in prophecy is represented as saying, "I am sent to bind up the broken-hearted, and to give the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Isaiah lxi. 1, 3.

Helps for a short conversation with one who, though a real Christian, is grievously tormented with wicked and blasphemous thoughts.

These will not be imputed to you as sin, any more than a fever, or any bodily distemper, which you did not willingly procure, and from which you have tried all means to be freed. "My brethren," says St. James, "count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations." (James i. 2.) Our Saviour himself was tempted, and the best of men have

always been the most obnoxious to the malice of the devil. To be so much concerned at such evil thoughts is a certain argument of a good disposition, since the wicked are rather pleased with them than tormented.

Helps for conversing with one who is under religious melancholy.

Some truly religious persons* are at times under sad apprehensions of not being in the favour of God, because they find their devotions cold, their delight in spiritual matters not so great as their delight in things of the world, and from other causes.

1. Shew yourself affectionately concerned for the distressed state of such a person.

2. Endeavour to convince him, that it is partly a bodily disease which affects his mind.

3. Inform him, that the different degrees of affection, with which men serve God, very often depend on the difference of their tempers and constitutions; that the first motions of our minds (as it is impossible to hinder them) are not reckoned sinful, provided we do not encourage them.

4. Correct his mistaken apprehensions concerning some religious truths.

5. Caution him against other things, which may increase and prolong his disease.

6. Be sure to inform him of persons recovered from as bad a state.

"The greater part of those who think they are

* I cannot do such as are in this unhappy way more essential service, than by recommending to them a little tract, entitled, *Observations on the Nature, Causes, and Cure of Melancholy*, especially of that which is commonly called religious melancholy, written by the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Fawcett, A. M. printed in 1780, and sold by Longman and Buckland, in Pater-noster-Row, London. Let them see likewise Dr. Clark's Sermon (late Rector of St. James's, London) on religious melancholy, from Job vi. 4. vol. x. 8vo. edition, p. 315, 316.

troubled in mind, (says Bishop Burnet, page 117 of his Pastoral Care,) are melancholy hypochondriacal people, who, what through some false opinions in religion, what through a foulness of blood, occasioned by their inactive course of life, in which their minds work too much, because their bodies are too little employed, fall under dark and cloudy apprehensions, of which they can give no clear nor good account. This in the greatest part is to be removed by medicines; yet such persons are much to be pitied, and a little humoured in their distemper. They must be diverted from thinking too much, being too much alone, or dwelling too long on thoughts, which are too hard for them to master."

Helps for conversing with one who is in despair.

Despair is a dishonour to God. Those who despair lose the comfort of God's mercies, by refusing to believe and apply them. "God is not willing (says St. Peter) that any such perish, but desires that all should be saved." For this end you were created. He is so far from being extreme to mark what is amiss, that he will not refuse the returning prodigal, nor reject any penitent. He has assured us he will not break the bruised reed: forgiveness of sins is the special grace of the Gospel: all preaching and prayers are in vain if God be unforgiving. Christ died for sinners, and hath comprehended all under sin, that through him he might have mercy upon all. (Rom. xi. 32.) If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. St. Paul advises, that if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual should restore such a man in the spirit of meekness, considering lest ye also be betrayed. Do not imagine God will be unfaithful to his promises. Those who are most grieved and wearied with the burden of their sins,

are most the objects of God's mercy. The best of men deserve it not, and you (though the worst) are not forbidden to hope for it. You cannot undo what you have done, but there is a remedy, a remission of sin, that you may not perish. You say in the Creed, that you believe in the forgiveness of sins: now prove the sincerity of that belief. Pray to God to enable you to resist all the fiery darts of the devil. Cast all your care upon God, and depend on him for the event, which you may be assured will be just, and for the same reason full of mercy. You should use all the efforts of reason and religion to make you love God: and can he, who loves God, perish? It is impossible.

These arguments should never be used but to well-disposed persons, or real penitents; for if the sick person have lived in a course of sin to the time of his sickness, these considerations are improper.

N. B. A Minister cannot be too careful how he administers that comfort to the vicious, which belongs only to real Christians, lest he should prostitute things sacred, encourage vice, and render his discourse deceitful, as the sick person would find it to be by dreadful experience in a place of punishment. Few however comparatively are tempted by too great fears of miscarrying: the most profligate are more inclined to unwarrantable assurances of their future salvation. Those, therefore, who attend the sick, should endeavour to prevent this great and reigning imposition of the devil.

Helps for conversing with a presumptuous sinner.

A man cannot think too lowly of himself, but may easily run into the contrary extreme. The bold and arrogant sinner should well consider this. The growth in grace is slow, difficult, uncertain, often interrupted, consisting of a great variety

and almost innumerable parts and distinctions, which a careless person can never discover. The more you presume, the greater reason you have to fear, because your confidence arises from your not understanding the dangers and follies of such a self-conceit. Your heart is deceitful, deceiving itself; deceiving others in various instances, being often in the gall of bitterness, when you appear with the fairest outside to the world. It is certain that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; but not so certain that any one's repentance is real, and essential to salvation. Virtue and vice are often so near neighbours, that we pass the borders of each without observation, and think we do justice when we are cruel, or call ourselves liberal when we are profuse in our expences. It is not easy to distinguish between the vices of nature and of choice; but oftentimes a man shall boast of his sobriety when it is against his nature to be intemperate, and think himself chaste by abstaining from women, when from a phlegmatic constitution he has little desire after them; or else from prudential, not religious, motives refrains from them. The self-accusing Publican was justified rather than the self-confident Pharisee. Adam in paradise; David in his house; Solomon in the temple; Peter and Judas, though disciples, and Nicholas among the deacons, fell, and even the angels in heaven. Be not high-minded, but fear. When most confident of yourself take heed, lest you fall.

Helps for conversing with the sick on the immediate duties of sickness.

1. *It is your duty to bear your sickness with patience.*

If your pain or confinement tempt you to impatience, read (or cause to be read to you) these texts concerning patience, and frequently meditate on them :

"In your patience possess ye your souls." Luke xxi. 19.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Heb. x. 36.

"Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins." Lam. iii. 39.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job." James v. 11. **"Be ye also patient."** James v. 8.

2. It is your duty to repent you truly of your sins.

When you exercise your repentance, meditate on the following texts. St. John the Baptist has fully instructed you to know whether your repentance is true.

"Bring forth, says he, fruits meet for repentance." Matt. iii. 8.

"For I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me." Psalm li. 3.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. lv. 7.

"The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. iii. 9.

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 1, 2.

3. It is your duty to believe in Christ, and to trust in God for the performance of his promises.

If you doubt the pardon of your sins, and are tempted to despond, you should meditate on the following texts.

"Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and

"is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. xii. 2.

"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. vii. 25.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Job xiii. 15.

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Psalm cxii. 7.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28.

Though you may be easy in yourself, as to your spiritual concerns, you may nevertheless be in great trouble and concern in regard to others. You have perhaps a wife and children very slenderly provided for; and it may grieve you to leave them in poverty.

If you should be troubled on their account, meditate on the following texts.

"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." Jer. xlix. 11.

"Cast all your cares upon God, for he careth for you." 1 Pet. v. 7.

"In thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Hosea xiv. 3.

4. *It is your duty to be willing to die.*

If you should be afraid to die, meditate on these texts.

"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Gen. iii. 19.

“Here we have no continuing city; but seek one to come.” Heb. xiii. 14.

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Rev. xxi. 4.

“There remaineth a rest for the people of God.” Heb. iv. 9.

“Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. xv. 57.

Helps for conversing with a child at any time; especially in a time of sickness.

God made all things; God knows all things; God sees you every where; God is able to help you, and restore you to health. He is gracious and merciful: you want his protection by night and day to keep you from evil, and to make you always safe and happy; you are a sinful creature, and want forgiveness; you stand in need of his grace to do your duty, [especially now in the time of sickness.] These blessings you know are to be sought for of God by prayer, therefore you will pray to him: all are his mercies which you receive, for which he ought to be praised, therefore you will praise him. You should acknowledge that all your hopes of acceptance is through Jesus Christ, your Mediator, and humbly beg of God, that [whether you recover, or whether this sickness be unto death,] you may be accepted of him.

Helps for conversing with one who has no suitable religious impressions on his mind.

Men too often think lightly of religion till death is ready to surprise them. Consider this before time and hope are for ever gone.

1. Think what you are, and for what end and work you came into the world. You are a man of reason, and not a brute. You were made to

know, love, and serve your Maker, not with the leavings of the flesh, but with all your heart and might : * and should not a creature live to the end and uses for which it was made ? How will you answer for such treacherous ungodliness ?

2. It is time for you to have serious thoughts of that eternal life, to which you are now hastening. If you could sleepily forget it all the way, surely it would be time to awake when you were come almost thither.

3. Seeing you are so near the judgment of God, where your soul must receive its final sentence, it is high time to judge yourself, and know in what state you now are ; whether in a state of salvation or condemnation.

4. I would advise you therefore to look back upon your sinful life with sorrow ; not only because of the danger to yourself, but also because you have offended God. What think you now of a sinful and an holy life ?

5. Resolve then to give yourself up in an hearty covenant to God. Take him as your Creator, Christ as your Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier ; and he will take you as one of his children. Though late, he will accept and pardon you, if you do it in sincerity. But see that you be truly willing, and never forsake him any more.

6. And if God have thus changed your heart and “ drawn it to himself,” (John vi. 44.) be thankful for such a mercy. Oh ! bless him for having given you a Redeemer, and a Sanctifier, and the pardoning covenant of grace : and now

* Let us not measure ourselves (says the late Bishop of Llandaff, Dr. Watson) by worldly riches. The soul is the standard of the man, and raises him vastly above all that is earthly. How foolish then, shameful, and impious is it, to prostitute ourselves to the trifles of this world, to be fond of earthly things, and to make our reason a drudge to sensual pursuits !

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be not afraid or unwilling to leave a sinful world, and come unto God.

7. Because there are so many cases of the sick which require the presence of a judicious instructor, endeavour to get the assistance of such an one. Remember at the same time that God would be just, were he to deny men that benefit in their distress, which in time of their health and prosperity they rejected with scorn and contempt. Whatever may be the end of this sickness, cleave to that God, whom you may enjoy for ever.

Helps for conversing with one who is sick relating to his spiritual wants.

1. You want the perpetual exertion of God's power, for the continuance of your life, and the support of your faculties.

2. You want his wisdom, to direct your uncertain steps.

3. You want his goodness, to supply your daily necessities.

4. You want his mercy, to pardon your numberless sins.

5. You want his grace, to assist you in the discharge of your various duties.

6. You want likewise a greater knowledge of God.

7. You want more faith in Christ.

8. You want true repentance, pardon of sin, the love of God, and grace of Christ.

Now you should plead for supply of these and your other wants in prayer.

Because your wants are great.

Because God alone can help you.

Because he is good and compassionate.

Because he hears prayer, and has promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

And you should rejoice, that he is ever ready and able to aid and befriend you, because we all depend on him for temporal and eternal life.

Helps for conversing with one in his sickness who had lived religiously, in order to prepare him for death.

1. Consider your sickness as a fruit of sin, yet wisely and graciously designed to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

2. Thus consider affliction, and it will reconcile you to the disposals of Providence.

3. Pray for divine grace and comfort suited to your weak and low condition.

4. Renew your repentance towards God, and your faith in Christ.

5. Warn all about you to set their hearts on heaven, and to make it the business of their lives to prepare for death.

6. Tell them what evil you have found in sin, what vanity in the world, what goodness in God and holiness, what comfort in Christ and the promises; and how miserable you had been if you had never cared for your soul till now.

7. Beg of them to live as they would die; to give their hearts to God in Christ; to redeem their precious moments; and to make sure of everlasting life.

8. Recollect your past mercies; such as to have been born in a Christian land; to have had conviction and conversion; pardon and reconciliation; deliverance from sin and hell, and lively hopes of glory. Let your views of the goodness and love of God to you fill you with contentment and satisfaction, and turn your fears into fervent love of Christ, and ardent desires to be with him.

9. Be delighted in the thoughts of the everlasting rest, to which you are going, where you shall neither fear, nor sin, nor suffer any more; but love and rejoice more than you can now conceive.

10. Resign your soul into the hand of God and Christ, without one distrusting care for yourself.

11. Magnify the goodness of God, and speak well of his name, his word, and his ways. Let others see there is a reality in the comforts of faith, and hope, and that the death of the righteous has enough in it to make their life also desirable.

As your tongue was given you to praise God, (and as you have but a little while more to speak,) exert all your remaining strength in his praise, in telling what you have found him, and in celebrating the glories of his kingdom, into which you are entering, that others may feel something of your hopes and desires. Then imitate your dying Saviour, and say, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Helps for conversing with one in sickness who has lived irreligiously, in order to prepare him for death.

Sickness is an improper time for a preparation for death: little can be done.

1. Be assured, that till you are convinced of your need of a Saviour and Sanctifier, you are in an unconverted state; destitute of God's favour, and exposed to everlasting destruction.

2. If you are convinced of this, and humbly acknowledge your sinfulness and misery, then Christ and salvation, with all the blessings of the covenant of grace, should be sought after most earnestly.

3. Give your immediate and hearty consent to have God for your reconciled Father, Christ for your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit for your Sanctifier.

4. Resolve, if you recover, to live to God through Christ, in all new and holy obedience.

5. Think of the infinite love of God in providing a Saviour for you, and how exceeding great and precious the promises are, and what glory there is in heaven for every true penitent.

6. Think of the infinite importance of praying for yourself, that your heart may be made truly humble and contrite, penitent and believing, and be effectually converted from the love of sin, to the love of God and Christ, of heaven and holiness.

7. If this late repentance and conversion would have produced an holy life in case you recovered, and be not the mere result of a frightened conscience, there is reason to hope you may be saved, though you die during this sickness. But God alone knows how far this blossom would have borne fruit. He may therefore consider that life as amended, which would have been amended if he had spared it.

Helps for conversing with one who is sick on the benefits of the Gospel.

Consider the goodness of God in giving you the Gospel or covenant of grace by Jesus Christ.

Consider the terms of it; namely, faith, repentance, and renewed obedience.

Consider the blessings of it; namely, pardon of sin, the aid of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.

Consider the duties of it; namely, love to God and to your neighbour.

Consider the promises of it, as sealed to you with the blood of Christ, and confirmed to you by his resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Consider your obligations to God for all these mercies, this inestimable benefit.

Helps for conversing with one who is sick on salvation by Jesus Christ.

Had not man sinned there would have been no need of a Saviour; for Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tim. i. 15.)

Sin is very offensive to God: "Be ye holy, as I am holy." (1 Peter i. 16.)

The disobedient and unruly are very offensive to us.

" You should confess your sins with shame and abhorrence.

Plead God's promises of forgiveness through Christ.

Acknowledge your obligations to him.

Though God is a just God to punish, yet he is merciful to forgive.

You should pray to be delivered from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt of it.

Helps for conversing with the sick on Christ's invitation to come to him, and his promise to receive all who accept it on the terms of the Gospel.

It is very necessary to enquire how are we to come to him? There is no other way than by the desire of the heart turned to him in deep humility, faith, and a lively sincere repentance.

1. You should come as a lost, undone, and helpless sinner, to an all-sufficient and merciful Saviour, and say with Peter, " Lord, save me, or I perish."

2. You should come as an humble, penitent sinner to an offended God, and say with the publican, " God be merciful to me a sinner."

3. As a polluted creature to a cleansing fountain of grace, and say with the lepers, " Unclean, unclean! Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

4. As a creature enslaved by sin and Satan, to a mighty Redeemer, and say, " If thou, Lord, wilt make me free, I shall be free indeed." John viii. 36.

5. As a diseased soul to Christ, the great spiritual Physician, and say with the woman in the Gospel, who was afflicted with a disease of long standing, " If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Christ approves, and honours such faith.

6. As weary and heavy laden under the burden of sin, that Christ may give you rest.

7. As a good subject and willing servant to Christ your Lord and Master. "His commands are not grievous." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

8. The law pronounces us accursed. We are by the law condemned criminals. Let us then say with the apostle, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins."

9. As weak and insufficient, come to the Captain of your salvation, and pray, "Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight against all my spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil."

Helps for conversing with one who is sick, founded on some important texts.

The language of too many unbelievers, while in health and prosperity, is, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." (Job xxi. 14.) I do not suppose you have ever said this in so many words; but is not your conduct to this effect? Does it not loudly proclaim this? And do you not neglect to pray for the knowledge of God and his ways?

"All have sinned against God." (Rom. iii. 23.) "All are become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) Do you desire to be delivered from this state? "Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Do you believe this, and pray that you may not perish?

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.) Do you call on him for salvation? "Christ came to save sinners, the chief of sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Do you pray to him daily, that he may save you? Is such a salvation to be slighted? Ought

you not to pray earnestly that you may partake of it?

“The blood of Christ cleanseth the penitent from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.) Are you penitent, and desirous, that it may cleanse you?

“The Holy Spirit is promised to them who ask it.” (Luke xi. 13.) Can you be holy without his assistance? Do you desire to be sanctified?

“Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me.” (Ps. l. 23.) Do you daily offer praise to God, and glorify him? Are you content to live without the knowledge of God, and salvation of Christ?

You may startle perhaps, and recoil at these questions; but think well of these things: be serious; be faithful, and apply other passages of Scripture in the same manner close to your consciences.

Helps for conversing with one who is sick on the reasons for which he is afflicted.

God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Lament. iii. 33.

You should not consider your sickness as barely the effect of second causes, but as inflicted on you by Providence for some wise and good ends, as for the trial of your faith; the exercise of your patience; the punishment of your sins; the amendment of your life; or for the example of others; who, seeing your good behaviour in such a day of trouble, may glorify your Father which is in heaven. Or else it may be for the increase of your future welfare, in order that by this humiliation here you may be led to Christ; and to an higher degree of glory hereafter. Let me exhort you therefore to be patient in tribulation, resigned to the will of God; and say with good old Eli, “It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth good unto him.” 1 Sam. iii. 18.

Helps for conversing with one in pain.

1. If the pain be acute, God will shorten it; if lasting, he will alleviate it, or else increase your strength, and sanctify to you the greatest pains, which he may not see fit to remove.

2. No pain can be compared to the hope of glory.

3. You should think on the examples of good men, who have suffered more. Meditate on Christ's sufferings, as recorded by the Evangelists. Read the twelfth chapter to the Hebrews.

4. You have heard of the patience of Job. Be ye also patient. James v. 11, 8.

5. This correction is intended to amend your life, to confirm your faith, and to exercise your piety.

6. You should be deeply penitent for sin; receive this affliction as a correction for it; implore God's pardon for it; earnestly beg the aid of his Spirit to support you; and pray, that, "though your outward man should perish, your inward man may be renewed day by day." 2 Cor. iv. 16.

7. Think how many are tempted to walk in the broad way which leads to destruction, and you will more easily bear your pain. Would you be Nero, the cruel profligate Roman emperor? or Job, the faithful servant of God, under his complicated afflictions and painful boils?

8. Afflictions are present physic for everlasting health.

9. Therefore prayer for grace, a dependence on Christ, obedience to the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and a progress in the divine life, are the true preparations for patient sufferings.

Helps for conversing with one who is sick, in order to bring him to a serious enquiry into the state of his soul.

I am sorry to see you in so weak a state. Your weakness bids me be short, and your memory is

not to be burdened with too much ; and yet your necessity must not be neglected. Let me entreat you therefore to be attentive to what I am going to say ; for I shall speak nothing but the certain truth of God, revealed to the world by his Son and Spirit, expressed in the Scripture, and believed by all sincere Christians.

The change you are near (should this sickness end in death) is very great. You are leaving this world, where you have spent the days which were allotted for your trial, whether you would prepare for eternity or not. You are leaving your body to corrupt and turn to common earth, and you must here converse with man no more. You are now going to see that world, of which the Gospel has told you, and of which you have often heard ; but which neither you nor I have ever seen. Before your friends can have laid your body in the grave, your soul must enter into its endless state ; and at the resurrection your body will be joined to it again. Either heaven or hell must be your doom for ever. If it be heaven, you will there find a world of light, love, and peace, and you will dwell with glorified spirits for ever. If hell should be your portion, you will be driven away from the face of God ; and you will there find a world of unholy, miserable, condemned spirits ; among whom you must dwell, under the wrath of God, and the horrors of your own conscience ; remembering with anguish the mercy you once rejected, the warnings you disregarded, and the time which once you lost ; and at the resurrection your soul and body will be re-united, and you must live there in torment and despair for ever.

I well know that these things are but half believed by the ungodly world, while they profess to believe them. They must therefore feel that which they refused to believe. But God has revealed it to us ; and let us believe our Creator.

Think, oh think what a preparation such a change as this requires.

So far may be sufficient for one visit.

At another you may proceed to this effect.

You cannot but be sensible that a great difference will be made at the day of judgment between the righteous and the unrighteous, the justified and the condemned. How nearly then does it now concern you to try which of these is your own condition. It may certainly be known, for "God will judge the world in righteousness" by the same law or covenant by which he governs it. Know but whom the law of Christ condemneth or justifieth, and you may soon know whom the Judge will condemn and justify; for he will proceed according to the law. If you should die in an unrenewed state, "die in your sins," your hope of heaven will die with you: and if you think ever so well of yourself till death, and pretend ever so confidently to trust in Christ, and the mercy of God, one hour will convince you, to your everlasting woe, that God's mercy and Christ's merits never brought an unsanctified soul to heaven. Self-flattery avails nothing, but to keep you from repenting till the time be past, and to quiet you in the snares of Satan, till there be no remedy. Immediately therefore, as you regard your soul, examine yourself, and try in which of these conditions you are, and judge yourself accordingly, before God judge you.

The remainder may be deferred, if necessary, till the next visit.

You may know, if you are willing, whether you have most minded earth, or heaven, and which you have preferred and sought with the highest esteem and resolution; and whether your worldly or heavenly interest have been most prevalent; and which of them it is that has had the ascen-

dancy over the other? Cannot you tell what it is which has had most of your love and care, what has been nearest to your heart, and which you have preferred when one was set against the other? Cannot you tell whether you have lived principally with a view to the things of this world, and for the pleasures of sin; or whether the Spirit of Christ has by his word enlightened you, shewed you your sin and misery, humbled you for it, and set before you the glory of the life to come, and the happiness of living in the love of God? Whether your heart has been united to himself, and turned from sin to holiness, from the world to God, from earth to heaven? And whether you are become a new creature, to live for heaven, as you did for earth? Surely this is not so small and undiscernible a work, or change, but that he, who has perceived it in himself, may know it*. One of these is your case; and is it not high time to know which of them it is, when God is ready to tell you by his judgments? If indeed you are in Christ, and his Spirit in you has renewed and sanctified you, and turned your heart and life to God, I have then sufficient foundation to speak peace and comfort to you. But if it be otherwise, and you are yet living as without God in the world, and were never renewed by the Spirit of Christ, permit me to deal faithfully with you, as it is necessary for me to do with one in your condition; and to set before you at once your sin and your remedy, and to tell you what you must yet do, while any time and hope remain, if you have a real desire to be saved.

* That you may know it satisfactorily, consider well what is here said, and see likewise, page 6, the conversation with one in a bad state.

SECTION III.

HELPS FOR VARIOUS CONSOLATIONS IN SICKNESS,
AND FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

Consolations for one during his sickness.

1. **THE** consideration, that it is the hand of God which corrects you, ought to awaken your patience and submission.

2. The end of his correcting you is not for his pleasure, but your profit.

3. Consider the greater sufferings of much more excellent and exemplary servants of God than yourself.

4. You may learn resignation from the shining pattern of Christian sufferers; you may learn it even from the patience and resolution of many among the heathens, who had neither your motives to incline them, nor your hopes to encourage them.

5. From the vicissitudes of health you may and ought to derive comfort in sickness. You are now sick, but have you not been a long time healthful?

6. The incomparable preference of such a sick state to full health, and forgetfulness of God.

7. Your sickness and sufferings are far less than your deserts; and therefore you should rather reflect on what you deserve to feel, than on what you actually do feel.

8. The advantages which arise from the exercise of submission in sickness.

9. The common condition of mortality, which unavoidably subjects you to changes and chances, to sickness and sorrows, should reconcile you to these whenever you meet with them. Sickness should never be looked upon as an unexpected guest.

10. Comfort in sickness may and ought to be derived from a comparative view of the evils of

others; from the freedom of our minds; the attendance of our friends; and the several advantages we enjoy in alleviation of our miseries.

11. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; not the consequence of his own misdoings. Whatever we endure we may justly say, "We receive the due reward of our deeds, but he hath done nothing amiss." Whatever may be our distress, we have his instructive example to direct and support us, and we have his all-sufficient sacrifice to atone for our sins.

12. Consider, that the eternal crown of glory, which shall be received by those who follow their blessed Master, and patiently endure to the end, shall more than overbalance all their miseries; and the joyful and pleasing expectation of it will serve abundantly to lessen the present weight of them, and render them easy to be borne.

A short plan of consolation.

1. *The consolation itself.*] It is God's will, who still continues many comforts to us. His will always wise, good, and best. We are his creatures; he has a right to us, as we have to our cattle, or lands. It is the Lord's doing. This was the support of Eli, Job, and Hezekiah.

2. *The improvement.*] To wean our hearts from the world; to set our affections above, where true joys are to be found; to excite us with greater diligence to prepare for our great change. "For us men sicken, and for us they die."

3. *The preparation.*] The only preparation is to secure the favour of God through Christ, and an interest in his merits, by which we are pardoned and justified; to secure likewise the aid of the Holy Spirit, by which we are made fit for heaven.

Heads of consolation, with suitable promises.

As we are all sinners, however unblameable before men : as we are all sinners in the eye of God ; and as we are all sinners against his perfect law ; our chastisements are less than our deserts.

Far less than those of Job, and other favourites of heaven.

Unspeakably less than Christ endured, though wholly innocent.

Endured too for us men, and our salvation.

Afflictions proceed from fatherly love.

Are medicines absolutely necessary for our souls.

Christ himself made perfect through sufferings.

Intended to wean us from a transitory world.

To bring us to the knowledge, faith, and love of Christ.

To set our affections on the complete and everlasting joys above.

Are light compared with the bitter pains of eternal death.

Are short compared with the endless ages of eternity.

Yet, by producing the afore-mentioned benefits, work out an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

Are a mark of our adoption,

A proof, that God deals with us as with children.

Yield opportunity of paying the most acceptable obedience to God.

Resignation better than sacrifice.

Submission more pleasing (through the blessed Redeemer) than the fat of rams. 1 Sam. xv. 22.

We should often turn to some of the most sup-

porting promises made to the afflicted, and treasure them up in our memories: such as the following;

“And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows.” Exod. iii. 7.

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” Ps. xxvii. 14.

“And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Ps. l. 15.

“My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” Ps. lxxiii. 26.

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise thou not the chastening of the Almighty.” Job v. 17.

“But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.” Lam. iii. 32.

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” Zech. xiii. 9.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Cor. iv. 17.

We should frequently meditate on these promises. They should be in our minds as the honeycomb in our mouths. These are the balm for our sorrows; a well-spring of consolation; and these are ours through the Redeemer’s merits. He died, nay died even the death of the cross, to make our title to these glorious privileges, these rich consolations, sure. Let us say therefore with an ancient

sufferer, "In God's word will I rejoice; in the Lord's word will I comfort me." Psal. lvi. 10.

These *Heads of consolation* should often be reviewed, seriously considered, committed to memory or writing, that they may always be present with such as are afflicted, as more needful and more sovereign for the refreshment of the soul than the choicest cordials for reviving the fainting body.

Consolations from prayer, considered as the universal remedy for all spiritual maladies.

This is the grand source of comfort; as no true comfort can be had without it, and as all true comfort may be derived from the right exercise of it.

No greater comfort can be enjoyed in any state of affliction than fervent, faithful prayer. Are you then sinking under a load of guilt? Come unto Christ by humble faith, and earnest prayer, and he will give you rest. Do you feel the pressure of sorrow, or the blast of censure? Instead of loathing your being, instead of breaking into sudden bursts of passion against your oppressors and slanderers, or contracting a settled gloom of malice, unbosom your secrets, and disburden your cares to him, who is both able and willing to resettle your discomposed mind. All that envenomed rancour, which is apt to embitter our spirits against mankind in general, and our enemies in particular, when we suffer, (or think we suffer undeservedly,) will abate and die away, as we lift our hearts to God in prayer; and consequently, "set our affections on the things above," reserved with the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort for us. Our bitter thoughts will then sweeten into an amiable humility, and we shall love our fellow-creatures.

Happy effect of prayer, which divests afflictions of their sting, and can change malevolence into love. We should therefore pray for one another; for what blessing cannot prayer obtain? If you

lack wisdom, by prayer you may gain it. If your sins be many and great, by prayer you may obtain pardon. If your lusts be strong and prevalent, by prayer you may have them weakened. If your graces be infirm, by prayer you may have them strengthened. There is no evil, which we feel or fear, but by prayer it may be removed; no good, which we either want or desire, but it may be procured by prayer. In short, prayer, faithful persevering prayer, can do all things on a reliance upon that inestimable promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Who then would live in the neglect of this very important duty! Who would not live in the constant and sincere performance of what is so advantageous to themselves, and so acceptable to God? The great spiritual Physician has prescribed this remedy for all our grievances, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." Lo! here is the great sovereign and infallible medicine for the distressed soul, which is able to give ease to every complaint.

Are you cast down on a sick bed? Call for the elders of the church, and let them pray. This was Hezekiah's receipt when he was sick unto death. "He turned to the wall, and prayed."

See Are you infested with importunate temptations? Then pray. So did St. Paul, when the messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him. "Thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me."

Are you disheartened with the weakness of grace? Pray. So did David, "I am feeble and sore burdened: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart: Lord, all my desire is before thee."

Are you distressed with poverty? Pray. So did David. "I am poor and needy: my heart is wounded within me. Help me, O Lord my God! Oh save me according to thy mercy."

Do you droop under the grievances of old age?

Pray. So did David, "Oh cast me not off in the time of old age, when my strength faileth me."

Are you troubled and dismayed with the fears of death? Pray. So did David, "My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them who go into the pit. I am as a man who hath no strength. But unto thee have I cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee."

Do you tremble at the thought of judgment? Pray. So did David, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." Look up with Jeremiah, and say unto God, "O Lord, thou hast pleaded the cause of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life. O Lord, judge thou my cause."

Are you afraid of the power, malice, and subtlety of your spiritual enemies? Pray. So did David, "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God. Defend me from them who rise up against me, O hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; consider mine enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with cruel hatred. Oh! keep my soul, and deliver me." St. Paul prayed on the like occasion; and he was answered with, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

So he intercedes for the Roman converts; "May the God of peace tread down Satan under your feet shortly." Rom. xvi. 20.

In short, whatever evil presses you, have speedy recourse to the throne of grace; pour out your heart before the Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort, and be sure, if not of redress, yet of ease. We have his promise for it, which cannot fail: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Some may pray to God with their lips only, while their heart is far from him: but be sure that he, who can truly pray from the heart, can never be truly miserable. Of ourselves we lie open to all evils; our

rescue is from above; and what intercourse have we with heaven but by our prayers? Your prayers can and will deliver you from dangers, avert judgments, prevent mischiefs, and procure blessings. Your prayers can and will furnish you with strength against temptations, mitigate the extremity of your sufferings, sustain your infirmities, raise up your dejected spirits, increase your graces, abate your complaints, sanctify all good things to you, sweeten the bitterness of your afflictions, open the windows of heaven, shut up the bars of death, and vanquish the powers of hell. Pray therefore, and be safe and happy.

AN HYMN,

Which was composed for the consolation of a penitent Christian; more suitable perhaps than many of those printed on these occasions. It may properly be used (if committed to memory) at any time of the day or night, as a profitable amusement and meditation; especially when rest cannot be obtained, sleepless, wearisome nights being appointed to the poor sufferer.*

MY God, my grateful heart I'll raise,
A daily altar to thy praise:
Thy friendly hand my course directs,
Thy watchful eye my bed protects.

2.

When tempests, woes, and death are nigh,
Past mercies teach-me where to fly:
The same almighty arm can aid,
Now sickness grieves and pains invade.

3.

To all the various helps of art
Kindly thy healing power impart;

* See Stonhouse's Spiritual Directions, p. 30, of the fifteenth tion.

Bethesda's bath * refus'd to save,
Unless an angel bless'd the wave.

4.

All med'cines act by thy decree,
Receive commission all from thee ;
And not a plant which spreads the plains,
But teems with health when heav'n ordains.

5.

Clay and *Siloam's pool* † we find
At heav'n's command restore the blind ;
Hence *Jordan's* waters once were seen
To wash a *Syrian* leper ‡ clean.

6.

But grant me greater favours still,
Grant me to know and do thy will ;
Purge my foul soul from ev'ry stain,
And save me from eternal pain.

7.

Can such a wretch for pardon sue !
My sins, my sins, arise to view !
Arrest my trembling tongue in pray'r,
And pour the horrors of despair ;

8.

But oh ! regard my contrite sighs,
My tortur'd breast, my streaming eyes ;
To me thy boundless love extend,
My God, my Father, and my Friend.

9.

These tender names I ne'er could plead,
Had not thy Son vouchsaf'd to bleed ;
His blood procures for Adam's race
Admittance to the throne of grace.

* See John v. 4.

† John ix. 7.

‡ 2 Kings v. 14.

10.

When vice has shot its poison'd dart,
And conscious guilt corrodes the heart,
His blood is all-sufficient found
To draw the shaft, and heal the wound.

11.

What arrows pierce so deep as sin?
What venom gives such pain within?
Thou great Physician of the soul!
Rebuke my pangs, and make me whole.

12.

Oh! if I trust thy sov'reign skill,
With due submission to thy will,
Sickness and *Death* shall both agree
To bring me, Lord, at last to thee.

A Letter of consolation from Archbishop Tillotson to Mr. Hunt of Canterbury, who had a cancer, of which he died in 1687.

SIR, I am sorry to understand by Mr. Janeway's letter to my son-in-law, Mr. Chadwicke, that your distemper grows upon you, and that you seem to decline so fast: I am very sensible how much easier it is to give advice against trouble in the case of another, than to take it in our own.

It hath pleased God to exercise me of late with a very sore trial, in the loss of my dear and only child*, in which I perfectly submit to his good pleasure, firmly believing, that he always does that which is best: and yet though reason be satisfied our passion is not so soon appeased; and when nature hath received a wound, time must be allowed for the healing of it. Since that God hath thought fit to give me a nearer summons of a closer warning of my own mortality, in the danger of an apo-

* Archbishop Tillotson never had a son; he had only two daughters; Mary, married to Mr. Chadwicke, and Elizabeth, who died before her.

plexity ; which yet, I thank God for it, hath occasioned no very melancholy reflections : but this perhaps is more owing to natural temper, than philosophy and wise consideration.

Your case, I know, is very different, who are of a temper naturally melancholy, and under a distemper apt to increase it ; for both which great allowances ought to be made : and yet, methinks, both reason and religion offer us considerations of that solidity and strength, as may very well support our spirits under all frailties and infirmities of the flesh ; such as these :

That God is perfect love and goodness ; that we are not only his creatures, but his children, and are as dear to him as to ourselves ; redeemed by that precious Son, who is the prince and pattern of sufferers ; that *he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men* ; and that all evils and afflictions which befall us are intended for the cure and prevention of greater evils, of sin and punishment ; and therefore we ought not only to submit to them with patience, as being deserved by us, but to receive them with thankfulness, as being designed by him to do us that good, and to bring us to that sense of him and ourselves, which perhaps nothing else would have done ; that the sufferings of this present life are but short and slight, compared with that extreme and endless misery which we have deserved, and with that exceeding eternal weight of glory which we hope for in the other world ; that if we be careful to make the best preparation we can for death and eternity, whatever brings us nearer to our end, brings us nearer our happiness ; and how rugged soever the way be, the comfort is, that it leads to our Father's house, where we shall want nothing that we can wish for. When we labour under a dangerous distemper that threatens our life, what would we not be contented to bear, in order to a perfect recovery, could we but be as-

sured of it? And should we not be willing to endure much more in order to happiness, and that eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, hath promised? Nature, I know, is fond of life, and apt to be still, lingering after a longer continuance here; and yet a long life, with the usual burthens and infirmities of it, is seldom desirable; it is but the same thing over again, or worse; so many more nights and days, summers and winters; a repetition of the same pleasures, but with less pleasure and relish every day; a return of the same or greater pains and trouble, but with less strength and patience to bear them.

These and the like considerations I use to entertain myself withal, not only with contentment, but comfort; though with great inequality of temper at several times, and with much mixture of human frailty, which will always stick to us whilst we are in this world: however, by thoughts of this kind death becomes more familiar to us, and we shall be able by degrees to bring our minds close up to it, without starting at it. The greatest tenderness I find in myself is with regard to some near relations; especially the dear and constant companion of my life; which I must confess very sensibly touches me: but, when I consider (and so I hope will they also) that this separation will be but for a little while; and that though I shall leave them in a bad world, yet under the care and protection of a good God, who can be more and better to them than all other relations, and will certainly be so to those that love him, and hope in his mercy, I receive comfort.

I shall not need to advise you what to do, and what use to make of this time of your visitation: I have reason to believe that you have been careful in the time of your health to prepare for this evil day; and have been conversant in those books, which give the best directions for this purpose; and

have not, as too many do, put off the great work of your life to the end of it; and then you have nothing to do, but as well as you can under your present weakness and pains to renew your repentance for all the errors and miscarriages of your life; and earnestly to beg God's pardon and forgiveness of them for his sake, who is the *propitiation for our sins*; to comfort yourself in the goodness and the promises of God, and the hopes of that happiness you are ready to enter into; and in the mean time to exercise faith and patience for a little while; and be of good courage, since you see land; the storm, which you are in, will soon be over, and then it will be, as if it had never been; or rather, the remembrance of it will be a pleasure.

I do not use to write such long letters; but I heartily compassionate your case, and should be glad if I could suggest any thing that might help to mitigate your trouble, and make the sharp and rugged way, through which you are to pass into a better world, a little more smooth and easy.

I pray God to fit us both for that great change, which we must once undergo; and, if it be but in any good measure fit, sooner or later makes no great difference.

I commend you to the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation, through the merits of his dear Son; beseeching him to increase your faith and patience, and to stand by you in your last and great conflict; that when you *walk through the valley of the shadow of death*, you may *fear no evil*; and when your heart fails, and your strength fails, you may find him *the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever*.

Farewell, my good friend; and whilst we are here let us pray for one another, that we may have a joyful meeting in another world. So I rest,

Your truly affectionate friend and servant,

JOHN TILLOTSON.

Consolations (especially in sickness) for one who is aged.

1. Frequently reflect, that God has long continued your life through the many casualties which have surrounded and threatened it. Entreat him, in the words of David, "not to cast you off in the "time of old age, nor to forsake you when your "strength faileth." Psal. lxxi. 9.

2. Be thankful for the many deliverances with which you have been favoured, and for the many supports God has been graciously pleased to give you from time to time, (especially during your present illness,) and for the many years you have securely enjoyed, without the apprehension, approach, or fear of evil.

3. But principally you should consider what returns you have made for such distinguished mercies.

4. Be ever mindful that you must be accountable at the bar of God for a long and sinful life, and for the use and abuse of many favours, which will appear before God either to your joy or terror.

5. Happy are you, if under the decay of nature you have the * support of your conscience! Miserable are you, if under the infirmities of old age you have the terrors of a guilty mind.

6. God has hitherto spared you: entreat him, that he may still further spare you for the purposes of repentance, faith, and renewed obedience.

7. Dedicate your heart and soul to his service in the short remainder of your life: short indeed, if this present sickness should not speedily summon you away, and render it still even shorter.

8. Persevere in an established course of piety,

* Age, thou the loss of friends and health shalt mourn :
But thou art hastening to that quiet bourn
Where grief is hush'd ; the tempest dark and loud
Shall beat, the wind shall blow ; thou in thy shroud
(The world's wild uproar heard no more) shalt rest,
While peaceful lies the hillock on thy breast.

and let not former habits of sin discourage you from attempting any thing towards making your peace with God on the terms of the Gospel.

9. Pray fervently, that you may be enabled "to finish your course with joy," with good resolutions, and good deeds, and thus gradually prepare your heart (as well as your infirmities will permit) to obtain the heavenly kingdom, and enter into it with comfort and gratitude.

10. These mercies you should daily and strenuously solicit God to grant for the sake and through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Advocate.

Helps for selecting passages from Scripture for consolation, particularly in sickness.

We should attend to the commands of God; we should pray for grace and strength to perform them; and we should treasure up in our memory suitable promises for our encouragement. I might bring many texts to this purpose; but I shall only mention the following as a specimen; which, though they are not found connectedly in the same chapter, may yet be pertinently applied for our direction and comfort.

The command.] "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die?" Ezek. xviii. 31.

The prayer.] "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. li. 10.

The promise.] "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh." Ezekiel xxxvi. 26.

The command.] "Thus saith the Lord, Stand in the ways, and see; ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." Jer. vi. 16.

The prayer.] "See if there be any wicked way
"in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ps.
cxxxix. 24.

The promise.] "They shall ask the way to Zion
"with their faces thitherward." Jer. l. 5.

The command.] "Keep thy heart with all dili-
"gence." Prov. iv. 23.

The prayer.] "Oh! keep my soul, and deliver
"me!" Psal. xxv. 20.

The promise.] "I, the Lord, do keep it: lest any
"hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Isaiah
xxvii. 3.

The command.] "Believe in the Lord your
"God." 2 Chron. xx. 20.

The prayer.] "Lord, I believe: help thou
"mine unbelief." Mark ix. 24.

The promise.] "They shall trust in the name
"of the Lord," Zeph. iii. 12.

The command.] "Turn ye to the strong hold,
"ye prisoners of hope." Zech. ix. 12.

The prayer.] "Be thou my strong habitation,
"whereunto I may continually resort." Ps. lxxi. 3.

The promise.] "He will dwell on high: his
"place of defence shall be the munition of rocks."
Isai. xxxiii. 16.

The command.] "Learn of me, for I am meek,
"and lowly in heart." Matt. xi. 29.

The prayer.] "That which I see not, teach
"thou me." Job xxxiv. 32.

The promise.] "They shall all be taught of
"God." John vi. 45.

The command.] "Let not sin reign in your
"mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts
"thereof," Rom. vi. 12.

The prayer.] "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me." Ps. xix. 13.

The promise.] "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14.

The command.] "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." 2 Tim. i. 8.

The prayer.] "Let none that wait on thee be ashamed." Ps. xxv. 3.

The promise.] "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Isai. xlix. 23.

The command.] "Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Mark xiv. 38.

The prayer.] "Lead us not into temptation." Matt. vi. 13.

The promise.] "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." 1 Cor. x. 13.

The command.] "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Eph. vi. 10.

The prayer.] "My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen thou me according to thy word." Ps. cxix. 28.

The promise.] "I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isai. xli. 10.

The command.] "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians v. 17.

The prayer.] "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke xi. 1.

The promise.] "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication." Zech. xii. 10.

The command.] "Your adversary, the Devil, as
 "a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he
 "may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith."
 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

The prayer.] "Save me from the lion's mouth."
 Ps. xxii. 21.

The promise.] "The God of peace shall bruise
 "Satan under your feet shortly." Rom. xvi. 20.

The command.] "Be thou faithful unto death."
 Rev. ii. 10.

The prayer.] "Let integrity and uprightness
 "preserve me." Ps. xxv. 21.

The promise.] "Even to old age I am he; and
 "even to hoary hairs I will carry you." Isaiah
 xlv. 4.

The command.] "Sing praises to God; sing
 "praises: sing praises to our King; sing praises."
 Ps. xlvii. 6.

The prayer.] "O Lord, open thou my lips,
 "and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." Ps.
 li. 15.

The promise.] "This people have I formed for
 "myself: they shall shew forth my praise." Isaiah
 xliii. 21.

*Helps for examining into the temper and conduct of the
 sick.*

1. Have you accustomed yourself to watch over
 the general current of your thoughts?

2. Have you examined the state of your mind
 by the rule of God's word, and not judged by the
 opinion you may have entertained of yourself, or
 which others may entertain of you?

3. Did you ever pray earnestly to God to pre-
 serve you from error, and to guide you into the
 way of truth?

4. As you cannot but know that you are guilty

before God, did you ever consider the sad consequences of such a state, that "the wages of sin are death;" and that the sentence on all impenitent sinners will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed?"

5. Do you not seek the praise of the world by compliances or neglects, which displease God?

6. Did you ever enquire in good earnest, as a guilty and helpless sinner, what you must do to be saved?

7. Do you acknowledge the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, (evidenced by works,) in order to your justification and eternal salvation?

8. Do you believe, that if you watch, pray, and attend seriously to the appointed means of grace, "the blood of Christ will cleanse you from all sin?" 1 John i. 7.

9. Do you find the love of God and your neighbour increasing in your heart? And do you think charitably of those who differ from you in sentiments and worship?

The whole of this important examination is in a great measure contained in this single text, "Are you conformed to this world, or not? Are you transformed by the renewing of your mind, or not? Have you proved (or tried and known by your own experience) that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect?" Rom. xii. 2. And do you take it as a rule for the conduct of your life?

This is the touchstone, which will shew what it is to have the power, as well as the form, of godliness*; what it is to do the will of God, and to delight in it†; to rejoice in Christ Jesus‡; to worship God in spirit and in truth§. In short, it will shew the difference between a nominal and real Christian.

* 2 Tim. iii. 5. † Ps. cxix. 16. ‡ Phil. iii. 3. § John iv. 24.

Helps for an examination as to the sick man's real state.

1. Have you examined the state of your soul as to faith, (Heb. xi. 6.) and as to practice; (Heb. xii. 14.) and how far these have agreed with the Gospel; with your baptismal vow; and with your Christian profession?

2. Have you judged and condemned yourself for all your sins with that hearty repentance and true faith, to which God has promised through Christ forgiveness of sins, that they may be blotted out by his mercy?

3. Do you enjoy the satisfaction of believing on this solid foundation that you are now in a pardoned state?

4. Do you daily pray to God for assistance to keep you in this state, and exert your own endeavours vigorously to continue in his favour?

5. Do you reflect on the sins which most easily beset you? and are you sensible of your own wretchedness?

6. Do you believe that God, through his Son Jesus Christ, will deliver you from your sins on the terms of the Gospel?

7. Have you an earnest desire of amendment, and a settled hatred of sin?

8. Will you endeavour to live more and more after God's will and commandments for the future?

Helps for an examination as to the sick person's discharge of those two important duties, self-examination and prayer.

1. Have you examined how far you have kept your baptismal vow? what sins you have committed, and what duties you have omitted, that you may put up suitable prayers?

2. Have you examined whether you truly repent of your sins? Is there no favourite sin you desire to keep? Is there no duty you wish to avoid?

3. Have you prayed to God, that you may not only know, but obey his whole will, and never wilfully offend him?

4. Have you prayed, that your afflictions may be sanctified, and that you may be assisted under them?

5. That you may be enabled to imitate Christ's example by a submission to the will of God?

6. That you may improve in grace and holiness, so that this sickness may end in a godly life, or an happy death?

☞ It was an excellent direction for improvement in holiness given by the great and good Bishop Butler, (late Bishop of Durham,) in his Charge to the Clergy, that at some particular hour, suppose morning, noon, or evening, when the clock strikes, (especially any church clock, as that would be a loud and never-failing memorandum,) they should set themselves, as in the presence of God, for a few minutes; and that a secret ejaculation might then be put up, in whatever company or employment they should happen to be engaged.

Helps for an examination as to the sick person's spiritual improvement.

Do you think you are in a state of wrath or of grace?

Do you live in any known sin?

How long have you left off such or such an evil course?

Are you constant morning and evening in prayer to God?

Do you delight in it?

Do you read and meditate on the Scriptures?

Do you trust in God for help in all your concerns?

Do you find yourself "growing in grace and in

“ the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?”

On the whole, do you think you are fit to die?

Helps for a sick man to examine himself, particularly as to his profession in life, natural constitution, and the influence of bad company.

As no flattery is so fatal as that of the physician and the divine, it is very unjustifiable in any one to speak peace to the sick where there is no peace, (Ezek. xiii. 10.) though people in general love to have it so. (Jer. v. 31.) Now in order to search the heart thoroughly, it may be proper in some cases to desire the sick person to examine himself how far he has been guilty of those sins which were incident to his particular way of life, whether as a minister, physician, lawyer, tradesman, &c. It cannot be supposed that either of these will make an open declaration of any injustice he may have practised in his particular profession; nor is it required of him to make any confession of such secret sins, but to God only; yet it is very necessary to remind him of these things, that he may closely examine himself in what he has been deficient, either through negligence, or want of care, or any guile or fraud in discharging his duty.

He should likewise examine what sins arise from his natural constitution; for when nature herself stirs up the passions, it is probable that he may “ commit all uncleanness with greediness.” Ephes. iv. 19.

He should further examine what sins he may have contracted by keeping improper company, or from the contagion of the world; for from hence are derived most of our evils, and all our miseries, in this world and the next. Men in general are partial, and too favourable to themselves and their actions, whether good or bad. Some are flatterers of others, but all of themselves.

SECTION IV.

HELPS FOR LIVING AND DYING HOLILY ; AS LIKEWISE HELPS IN REGARD TO THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE SICK, AND THE ATTENDANTS ON THE SICK.

Helps for living while in health, so as to be in a constant state of preparation for sickness.

1. **SINCERELY** repent of every known sin ; for it is sin which gives death its sting ; and pardon is promised to sincere repentance.

2. Trust your soul with all its interests in the hands of Jesus Christ on the terms of the Gospel. He is the owner of it by the right of redemption. To save souls is his proper office, work, and even covenant. He intercedes in heaven, and prepares mansions there.

3. Devote yourself entirely to God, and live to please him, and to do good to all around you. Thus your conscience will bear witness on a sick bed, that notwithstanding all your infirmities, you have answered the great ends of life.

4. Take heed of quenching the spirit. (1 Thess. v. 19.) Whatever good we do, either in sickness or health, it must be by the assistance of that divine agent. If we cease to pray for it, (see Luke xi. 13.) and resist its gracious influences, it will withdraw from us ; and we shall gradually lose our love to holiness, and grow indifferent to the things of God.

5. Live continually in a thankful sense of the love of God to your own soul. Daily consider the greatness of that love, both in the nature of God, and in the blessings of the Gospel ; and likewise in your own particular experience of his love. This will make heaven desirable, and overcome the fears of death.

6. Live in heaven while you are on earth by

frequent meditation on it. A great part of preparation for sickness lies in this. If you are a stranger to heaven in health, you will be too much so in sickness. If you are risen with Christ, you will seek those things which are above. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. vi. 21.

7. Live a life of self-denial. Let nothing in this world be too dear and pleasing to you. If you are over-fond of any thing here, parting will be more difficult. Endeavour to lessen your attachment to it by the consideration that you must soon leave that, or else that that will soon leave you.

8. Get some good assurance of your own sincerity. If you doubt this, it will excite your fear, and make you dread a sick bed, and be unwilling to die. Examine your repentance, faith, love, and every Christian grace, once every week.

9. Keep your worldly affairs in as settled a state as the nature of them will permit, and never be without a will: sickness is not a proper time to make wills.

10. Be serious, and then you "will be wise, and consider your latter end."

A solemn Declaration of the disposition in which a man would wish to be found in sickness or at death; and which ought to be frequently (suppose weekly or monthly) and devoutly made, as in the presence of God.

My Lord and my God; in this uncertainty of the time, place, and manner of my death, I desire to adore thy providence in every thing which thou shalt be pleased to appoint concerning me; and not knowing in what circumstances I may be at that awful hour, I will do at present what I desire should be done then. And I humbly beseech thee favourably to receive this declaration then, which I solemnly make before thee now.

As in the last moments of my life I may be de-

prived of speech and reason, and unable either to speak or think of thee, I here thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast given me life ; whereas I might never have been created, and consequently never could have been a candidate (as I now am) for admission into thy kingdom of glory.

I thank thee that I was born in a Christian country, whereas I might have been born in a land where thy Gospel is yet unknown.

I adore thee as the fountain not only of my natural, but of my spiritual life. Thou art truth, and I believe what thou hast declared by thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Thou art faithfulness, and I trust in the performance of thy promises. Thou art the supreme God, and I desire to love thee supremely now and for ever.

It is thou, O Lord, who hast created me by an effect of thy power, redeemed me by an act of thy love, sanctified me by thy grace, conducted me by thy providence, and designed me for heaven : for this end thou hast admitted me into thy church by baptism, guided me by thy word, refreshed me by the sacramental bread and wine, and comforted me with the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.

Many and great are the mercies I have received. "Thou daily loadest me with thy benefits." Yet how unsuitable have been my returns to thee ! Ingratitude, vain-glory, impatience, unbelief, and innumerable other sins.

But, O my God, the greater my offences, the greater will be thy glory in pardoning them. Sins innumerable, such as mine, stand in need of abundant mercies, such as thine.

I plead therefore, O Lord, thy boundless mercies in Christ Jesus, and am truly sorry that I have provoked thee so long, known thee so late, and loved thee so little.

Here in thine awful presence, O Lord, I declare my detestation of all my sins both of heart and

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life, because they are contrary to thy holiness, and abominable in thy sight.

And I offer thee, O Lord, for reparation of the outrages of my sins against thee and my fellow-creatures, the love, obedience, and merits of thy Son, my only Saviour; and I submit to death, as justly merited for my sins, having been disobedient, and therefore most justly condemned to suffer death. But spare me, O Lord, spare thy servant, redeemed by thy Son's most precious blood, that I may not suffer everlasting punishment.

I submit to the destruction of the body, which has been the instrument of so many sins; I submit to the destruction of it in obedience to thy dominion over me. I submit to all the desertions, troubles, pains, agonies, and all the evils thou hast reserved for my offences. It is my earnest prayer, that I may be enabled by such a submission to shew, that I devote myself wholly to thee in life and in death.

And I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to remember, that I am the work of thy hands, and redeemed by thy Son's death. He died, and encourages me to follow him. He loved me, and I desire to love him. I solemnly declare my belief in the glorious Gospel, the terms of which I thankfully embrace. I renounce all self-confidence, and have no hope of salvation but in the merits of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If there be any thing which may arise in me contrary to this, I disown it; for it is my earnest desire, that the last motion of my heart may be one of adoration, offering up to thee the homage of my whole being. May it be likewise a motion of love to thee, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, and may that love be continued to all eternity!

When I think on what I should have been, and on what I have been, I am confounded. "Lord, save me, or I perish." I am under great fears,

because my sins are so great, and thy judgments so terrible: yet notwithstanding my fears, my hopes are greater, because thou art merciful, and hast promised forgiveness through Jesus Christ to every penitent sinner. Oh! that my repentance may be sincere, and that I may not deceive myself by supposing I am penitent, when I am not.

My faith is weak: Lord, strengthen it, that I may rely more fully on thy promises, and so be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting.

I again adore thy power, which created me; thy goodness, which redeemed me; thy wisdom, which has enlightened me; thy providence, which has governed me; thy mercy, which has so often pardoned me. I adore also thy justice, and submit myself to it, as it has decreed death for the punishment of sin.

And I submit with the hope, that thy mercy in Christ Jesus will answer for me before the tribunal of thy justice; and that thou wilt for his sake receive me into thy kingdom of glory; there to praise thee, and the great Redeemer, through all the boundless ages of eternity.

N. B. This declaration partly expresses the disposition in which every real Christian desires always to be found, especially at the hour of death. He prays that his mind may then be strongly impressed with a true sorrow for sin, and a fervent love for God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The fear of death decreases in proportion as our faith in the Redeemer increases: but great caution is necessary, lest our faith should be presumption only. Let it be remembered, that, as "without faith it is impossible to please God," (Heb. xi. 6.) so "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

The state of a condemned sinner illustrated by comparing him with a condemned malefactor, in order to shew the absurd notions which too many entertain of salvation.

It is very surprising that such numbers, as call themselves Christians, should be so much unconcerned about their future state, and entertain such wild conceits of their salvation. How often during my attendance on the sick have I found them very ignorant of the terms of the Gospel, and of that holiness, without which (as the apostle has declared) "no man shall see the Lord," and to whom a heaven would be no heaven were they admitted into it. Their notion in general is, that God will be merciful, and pardon their sins, though they have disregarded the means of grace, and never had any of the necessary qualifications for the enjoyment of a society of the spirits of just men made perfect. I shall endeavour therefore to shew by the following comparison, that a pardon of their sins, on which they presumptuously depend, could be of no signification to them, unless they had acquired that holiness, which is absolutely necessary to fit them for heaven. I have placed the comparison in opposite columns, that it may more clearly be apprehended by common readers.

Suppose some wretched malefactor, condemned for his crimes to suffer an ignominious death.

Suppose likewise some miserable sinner condemned for his transgressions to suffer eternal torments.

Of what importance would a pardon be to such an one, if, at the same time, he was languishing in the last state of a consumption, or un-

Of what importance would a pardon be to such an one, if he was still under the power of his deadly sins, the deplorable sickness of the

der a complication of diseases for which he knew no cure? and which diseases as they prevent his body from receiving its natural nourishment, must unavoidably and speedily bring him to the grave?

mind, for which he knew no cure? and which sins, as they prevent his soul from receiving its spiritual nourishment, must unavoidably and speedily bring him to everlasting destruction?

But could he obtain a pardon through the intercession of a physician, who would at the same time, if solicited, bring to his assistance, as a sure remedy, a powerful medicine, in the continual use of which his drooping nature would gradually be revived, till a cure was completed;

But could he obtain a pardon through the mediation of Christ, who would at the same time, if solicited, bring to his assistance, as a sure remedy, the means of grace and influences of the Holy Spirit, in the continual use of which the new man would gradually be formed in him, till he had attained an utter abhorrence of sin, and a delight to do the will of God;

Then a pardon would indeed avail, and he would have true reason to rejoice for so complete a deliverance; because by the aid of powerful medicines he would be restored to that health of body, which would enable him to enjoy the society of his fellow-creatures.

Then a pardon would indeed avail, and he would have true reason to rejoice for so complete a deliverance; because by the aid of the Holy Spirit he would be restored to vital holiness, that health of soul, which would enable him to enjoy the society of the blessed.

Happy is it for us (though, alas! we are not sufficiently sensible of the blessing) that, sick and distempered as we are, we have a physician in our Judge, able to pardon our sins, and to heal our distempered souls.

✚ The following plan I drew up some years ago, and printed many hundreds of it for the use of the parishioners of Great and Little Cheverel; and it is inserted here in hope that its usefulness may be extended, particularly to the sick.

The Plan of Salvation, as contained in the Gospel covenant.

The design of it.

To exalt the Saviour. Phil. ii. 9.
To humble the sinner. Luke xvii. 10.
To promote holiness. Heb. xii. 14.

The blessings promised.

Pardon of sin. Acts x. 43.
Assistance of the Spirit. Luke xi. 13.
Eternal glory. 1 Pet. v. 10.

The terms required.

Repentance. Luke xiii. 3.
Faith. Heb. xi. 6.
Renewed obedience. Heb. v. 9.

The true nature of repentance.

It is a real and total change of heart and life; and consists in
Sorrow for sin. 2 Cor. vii. 10.
Confessing it. Ps. xxxii. 5.
Forsaking it. Prov. xxviii. 13.
Perseverance in well-doing. Matt. x. 22.

The principal means of grace.

Secret, Matt. vi. 6. and family prayer. Jer. x. 25.
Self-examination. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Meditation. Ps. cxix. 148.

Public worship. Heb. x. 25.

Receiving the sacrament. Luke xxii. 19.

Reading the Scriptures. John v. 39.

Religious conversation*. 1 Thess. v. 11. Prov. xv. 7. Mal. iii. 16.

On the regular and constant use of these means in a reliance on the Gospel covenant is founded the hope of glory.

The body (given us by God) is to be preserved by the due use of wholesome food.

The soul redeemed by Christ is to be nourished by the due use of the means of grace, which are the proper food of souls.

Without the continual use of suitable food both must perish.

Helps for the sick person himself, how to behave properly under it.

1. You should constantly be mindful to behave with patience and thankfulness to all those (whether relations, friends, or servants) who kindly attend on you in your sickness. Be not fretful, nor shew uneasiness or anger on any little forgetfulness or slowness in those about you, or if things should not be ready for you just when and how you would have them to be.

2. You should frequently say to yourself under any temptation to be displeased with your attendants, "Lord, enable me to bear with patience all the pain or severity of the distemper which I now suffer, and to receive with thankfulness all the necessary services which others endeavour to render me."

3. You should moreover beg of God "to remember for good" all their kind offices to you;

* See Dr. Lucas's very useful little tract on the Influence of Religious Conversation, with the Regulations of it. Also, Walker's Regulations of Religious Conversation.

and not "to remember against you" your fretfulness or peevishness in your acceptance of their services.

4. You should desire them to consider your weakness, to pity it, and to bear with it; and you should strive to watch against it, and not to fall into it continually by giving way to it.

5. You should shew your contentment by an habitual readiness to comply with the directions of every kind which may have been given you, especially with those by the minister and your physician; and you should often with gratitude express your satisfaction that you have such comforts about you, while so many, much better than yourself, stand in need of them.

6. If your sickness be of such a nature, that any noise would affect you, or the sight of company agitate you, or be rather troublesome than acceptable, you should not out of compliment admit them. They should be informed, that an interview would be prejudicial to you, and that you cannot converse with them. When you found yourself a little refreshed by sleep, or by the mitigation of your distemper, you might choose perhaps to have that interval to yourself for reflection, and your private affairs, especially if you were dangerously ill; and should any one inconsiderately desire to see you, on hearing you are a little better, (as is too often the case,) you must absolutely prohibit it, or risk your recovery. No prudent friend would attempt to break in upon you at such a time, though he would be always ready to visit you whenever you signified to him that his company might be helpful to you.

7. When you are incapable of reading, or using any forms of prayer yourself, let such as you think best suit with your present need and desire be read to you by an attendant on you. Or, if you should be so very ill that you cannot hearken to any reader, put up some short petitions, or ejacu-

lations, which you may do frequently and devoutly from your own memory, or from what your own wants and feelings will naturally suggest to you ; particularly for a blessing on the medicines you are taking.

8. Besides your own prayers for yourself, you should desire the prayers of others for you. You should send to the minister, and request the public prayers of the congregation to which you belong. And if you can afford to give alms at the same time to the poor, the prayers of the church will be more likely to prevail for you. Cornelius's alms accompanied his prayers. Acts x. 31.

9. When you can receive any friendly visitors without inconvenience, desire the favour of such of them as are religiously disposed to remember you in their prayers ; thus shewing on all occasions your eye is looking to God for help in your sickness more than to man ; and that you expect to reap your chief benefit from fervent prayer, especially from the prayers of those who are the most faithful servants of that God, who has declared, for our consolation, that he heareth prayer. See the Consolations from Prayer, p. 57.

10. By such ways and thoughts as these you may bear your pain and weakness with patience, thankfulness, resignation, and trust in God. You may likewise make such reflections on them as are fitting for a sick bed.

Helps for the attendants on the sick, in regard to their behaviour.

1. You may give some assistance in promoting the salvation of the sick, and should therefore add to your care of his body that of his soul ; for by this you will best testify your love, and do him the most signal service.

2. You should prevent, as much as possible, his mind from being diverted from serious things,

either by the impertinent discourses or improper behaviour of those who visit him.

3. You should cherish in him, as much as you well can, the pious thoughts which the minister has excited; read to him, when convenient, plainly and distinctly, one of the seven penitential Psalms, [namely, vi. xxxii. xxxviii. li. cii. cxxx. cxliii.] some passages relating to the sufferings of Christ, or such other parts of Scripture, as may be most beneficial to him in his present circumstances.

4. As the minister (though he may visit him often) cannot always be with him, you should endeavour to supply his place by advising and comforting the sick on whom you attend.

5. You will naturally expect the same kindness from others, if you yourself should ever be seized with any dangerous illness: you should therefore put in practice that admirable rule of our Lord, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." Matthew vii. 12.

6. If you are much grieved to see the sick person dangerously ill, you should endeavour to check and moderate your grief, especially before him, since it is vain, useless, and contrary to right reason, because it does no real good; and if it be indulged too far, it will be displeasing to God; who may indeed forgive it; yet excessive grief can never be indulged without opposing his authority. You should use therefore your best endeavours and prayers, in order to submit your will to God's will.

7. If the sick be likely to die, you who are about him will probably be reminded by the minister of the uncertainty of life, that death is the common lot of all; that you should not be either averse to your own death, or too greatly lament that of others; since we were all born on this condition, that we should leave the world when God commands; and we must all soon follow the de-

ceased to the grave. "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" Zeck. i. 5.

8. You who are the attendants should do all in your respective stations diligently and tenderly. You should join in prayer with the minister; you should put up ejaculations to heaven, that it may please God to give the dying person rest and pardon, and to yourself grace to live well, and to die holily and happily. You should make no outcries on the departure of the soul from the body; nor give any positive judgment afterwards on the state of the deceased, because he died quietly, or violently; with great fears, or a cheerful confidence; in his senses, or out of them; with convulsions and terrible agonies, or in silence, like an expiring lamp; for these may happen severally according to the constitution of the person, and the nature of his distemper; or as God pleases to dispense the grace, or the punishment, for reasons only known to himself.

Further helps for the attendants on the sick, in regard to their behaviour.

1. You should read to the sick person, if he be not able to read himself, some suitable portions of Scripture, or discourse with him profitably on repentance, redemption, patience, thankfulness, trust in God, death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

2. You should endeavour occasionally to suggest serious thoughts fit for the comfort or admonition of one who is looking on himself as taking leave of the world, and going to meet his eternal doom.

3. You should endeavour to spiritualize accidents, and take occasion from all that happens to excite the sick person to make profitable reflections, so that he may not want the hint of a good thought, as often as he is ready to receive it. A most comfortable and important text for his me-

dition and your prayer for him is, "that the God of hope may fill him with all joy and peace in believing, that he may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13.

4. If he awake more easy, you may tell him he should bless God for that ease, and observe to him how tenderly God proportions trials to our weakness, considering as a tender father what we can bear.

5. Or, if he awake under more pain, you might suggest to him, that if it be great it is likely to be shorter; that God knows best how much and how long we can bear; that he is in good and merciful hands whilst he is in God's, and that he should be quiet under them; that he should wait on God, who expects to be waited on; and often tries the faith and trust of his servants, before he recompenses them with the desired blessing.

6. On all occasions, when any benefit has been received by the sick person, either by food, or medicine, or sleep, and likewise on any want of them, or any occurrence, or discourse, which he has noticed, you will be acceptable and useful friends indeed if you have judgment sufficient to raise up his mind to pious thoughts, or desires about those things, and to make him reflect on the power, the patience, the mercy, the fidelity of God, or on the wickedness and folly of men, the vanity of worldly things, the usefulness of religion and heavenly affections, the temptations and dangers of health and ease, the benefit of sickness, the blessed fruits of patience, and the recompence which crowns it at last.

7. And if at any time the sick person do not receive your discourse, or other services, with that willingness which you might expect from him, you should wait another opportunity, and not slacken your good offices; but endeavour to time them better, or make them more agreeable to him on the

next occasion; not taking any thing ill of him in this condition, but pitying what would provoke you at another time.

8. Or if he seem concerned that his disease renders him troublesome to his friends, you may suggest to him, that friends are born for adversity, and to bear a part of each other's troubles; and that the same all-wise God, who sends him the trouble of his pains and sickness, sends you also the trouble of your attendance, and equally expects a willing and cheerful reception of these respective troubles from both.

9. You should make allowances for the infirmities of the sick, which you yourself may soon feel; and be as unwilling to take, as to give just cause for exception. By this means you may alleviate and lighten those sorrows which you cannot prevent.

SECTION V.

HELPS FOR CONVERSING WITH THE SICK, IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM PROPER NOTIONS OF SIN AND REPENTANCE; ESPECIALLY OF A DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

Helps for conversing with the sick on the nature of sin.

THERE are several kinds of sins, and various ways of prevaricating with God's commandments. I shall endeavour to make you sensible, that every sin is more or less aggravated according to the different circumstances of it, as by the great or small degree of the temptation; the scandal it gives to others; the dishonour it does to religion; the injury it does to those whom it may more immediately concern; the degree of boldness and impudence attending it; the continuance in it; the expence, desires, and habit of it. Some sins are

not forbidden by the law of man, which are forbidden by the law of God; as lying in common discourse, jeering, calumniating, ingratitude, selling too dear, out-witting and over-reaching in bargains; extorting, and taking advantage of the necessities or ignorance of others; importunate entreaties and temptations of our companions to many instances of sin, as intemperance, pride, and ambition; all these strangely blind the understanding, captivate the affections of sinful men, and lead them into many snares of the Devil, of which they are not aware. Some sins are thought inconsiderable, and are called sins of infirmity, as idle thoughts, foolish talking, impatience, anger, and keeping trifling company. Many things are thought to be no sins, such as mis-spence of time; whole days or months of useless or impertinent employment; gaming; winning men's money; censuring men's actions; equivocation in the prices of buying and selling; rudeness in speech or behaviour; doing actions in themselves good, with sinister and evil designs, and the like.

Now in all these cases it is necessary to be inquisitive, and very careful that such kind of fallacies does not prevail over the sick; but that those things which passed unobserved before, should now undergo an impartial censure, excite religious sorrow, and heart-felt condemnation.

To this may be added some such enquiries as the following, in regard to the omission of his duty; for in many instances the failures in these important points are undiscerned, because the conscience has not been made tender and perceptible of them.

Have you neglected public, family, or secret prayer, reading the Scriptures, instructing your family in the principles of religion? Have you redeemed time? Have you grown in grace, and done all the good you could? Have you relieved the needy, comforted the afflicted, and visited the sick?

Have you been wanting in obedience, duty, and respect to superiors, especially to parents? Have you done the work of God negligently, not discharging the duty of your station with fidelity, care, and exactness?

Have you ever duly weighed the malignity and deceitfulness of sin?

Sin is the greatest of all evils, as it is our curse and death; as it is the cause of our separation from God; and as it exposes us to everlasting condemnation.

Yet multitudes, who call themselves Christians, live without any true notion of the heinousness of sin; the misery of an unpardoned state; the worth of a Saviour; or the nature and necessity of repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

They are baptized, but live and die without knowing, without enquiring to what valuable end their baptism serves. They go through a round of religious services in a formal lifeless manner, on which might properly be written, *To the Unknown God*. They hope all is well with them; but their hope is centred in themselves, in the conceit of their own worthiness, in partial performances, and not in Christ, of whom they make little account; and consequently it is an unscriptural hope, utterly insufficient to the rest and repose of an immortal soul.

Thus are they deceiving themselves, and ruined through the deceitfulness of sin.

Helps for conversing with the sick on the nature and necessity of true repentance.

True repentance is a change of mind, a thorough renewal of heart and life. You must not presume it is right and perfect, because you feel a degree of sorrow, and express a degree of compunction for your sins.. This may and undoubtedly often does

spring from worldly motives, from the sense of our sufferings, and the temporal evils which our sins may have drawn upon us. True repentance is much more than this. It is a real, heart-felt sorrow for our sins, as offensive to God, and ruinous to our souls; as a sufficient cause for God's indignation, and of our everlasting "destruction from the glory of his presence." * True repentance is an abhorrence, a detestation of sin, as defiling our nature, and necessarily separating us from a pure and holy God, who can have no communication with sinners, and who therefore to expiate their sins sent his Son to die on the cross! And, if repentance be sincere, it must go still farther. It not only truly laments what is past, and wishes to undo it, as far as possible, at any price; but it resolves in just abhorrence of sin, and its destructive nature, to fly from its practice in future, and to direct all the thoughts, words, and actions by that love of God, which is holiness; and by that rule of life, which alone, through divine grace, can lead to the favour of the Almighty.

The truly penitent sinner will daily, hourly, and continually look up by humble faith to Him, who was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." He will chiefly delight in reading or hearing the blessed Gospel, and will rejoice to know and feel, that "there is no other name under heaven whereby we can receive health and salvation, but only in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Happy to be assured, that by an entire confidence in him, and perfect resignation to his holy will, he shall at length, however worth-

* "It is wonderful," says the great Lord Clarendon in his Essay, "that there is not one Christian in the whole world, how different soever in other opinions, who professes to have any hope of salvation without repentance; and yet there are so few who take any pains to be informed about it, or know how to practise it." There never was an observation more suited to the genius of any age or people than this is to that in which we live.

less in himself, obtain pardon and peace, and be numbered with the penitent in heaven.

Permit me then to ask you, Do you perceive in yourself this repentance, this undissembled contrition in your heart? Are you truly sensible of your numberless offences, and of your eternal ruin without the merits and mediation of the great Redeemer? Do you in the bitterness of your convicted soul thus lament, "O wretched man that I am!" and ask, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" O wretched man, that I am thus defiled with sin, thus an enemy to God by wicked works, thus *self-destroyed, where, where is my hope? O Saviour of the world, who by thy precious blood hast redeemed lost mankind, have mercy on me! O Saviour of the world, save me and help me, or I perish!

If this is indeed the sincere language of your heart, I congratulate you on this blessed dawn, this opening of a future better day. Let me press you then to a conduct, which both to yourself and others will give all possible proof and satisfaction, that the work of a real repentance is begun in your heart.

It is an undeniable truth, that sin never did, never can, nor ever will either make man happy, or produce him any solid and substantial good; so the sooner you absolutely quit all its love in your heart, and its practice in your life, the greater comfort will you gradually receive, and find every day more and more serenity of soul; however at first, as it is reasonable to expect, the stings and reproaches of a convinced conscience may be sharp, piercing, and sometimes painful, very painful: but be not discouraged by these; rather consider them as proofs that your soul is alive, and be incited by

* See Hosea xiii. 9. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but ~~in me~~ is thy help." This is the case of every convinced sinner, till his reconciliation to God by Jesus Christ.

them, as motives to a zealous perseverance in the great work of reconciliation with God. To this end endeavour to be much in meditation and self-recollection. And one thing you must do, for without it all the rest will be hopeless : you must not fail to lift up your heart in prayer to God on every convenient occasion for his assisting grace, and merciful favour to you. Remember, prayer is not a mere repetition of words : it is the language of the heart, expressing a due sense of its wants and woes to that God, who hears the prayers of all his people, and knows all their circumstances. You should continually thus express your heart to him : your heart conscious of its evils, deploring them, and desirous of pardon for them, and deliverance from them. You should moreover continually dart up earnest petitions to the Father of compassions, fervent ejaculations to the throne of grace in every place and at every time. In short, keep your heart fixed and intent upon God, turn to him in sincere desire, and it will turn to him in the language of that desire ; for it will pray.

Give me leave to observe, that what I advise to you is that on which I depend myself for salvation. I confess* myself a deeply humbled, penitent sinner. On Christ alone is my hope and trust ; on Christ, as accepting my soul in true and unfeigned repentance, and perfect submission, offering up its unworthy self before him.

You may be fully assured, that, unless we pray for his divine and all-powerful grace to work in us this repentance and resignation, this love of him and of holiness, this universal charity and goodwill, we cannot in the nature of things be par-

* See the Confession in the Communion Service. " We are heartily sorry for these our misdoings : the remembrance of them is grievous to us ; the burden of them is intolerable."

takers of his kingdom ; nay indeed we could find no happiness or pleasure in that kingdom, were it conceivable that we could be admitted there in such an unrenewed state. It is a kingdom of holiness, purity, and love, into which nothing sinful, defiling, or malevolent can ever enter. Like must associate with like. Endeavour therefore to turn from sin in heart, lip, and life, and become holy, like God ; and then, however and whenever he is pleased to take you from this present life, you will infallibly find happiness with him, as you will be made fit through his grace for the inheritance of the saints in light. There, delivered from the power of evil, you will no more know sin, sorrow, or death ; but will rest with God in peace and comfort, in holiness and happiness for ever.

☞ Man is the only creature concerned that he must die, because he is the only creature concerned after death : no man therefore should be so much his own enemy, as to have his repentance to begin in a time of sickness. This ought to have been the practice of his former life, and then he might complete it in his sickness by confessions of his sins ; by pleading a pardon on the terms and promises of our Lord Jesus Christ ; by resolutions of amendment, should he recover ; and by shewing the truth of his repentance by its fruits, particularly by acts of charity to the poor, according to his abilities, and by a forgiveness of his enemies, if he have any. This is a work for all men at all times who would wish to live in safety, or die in peace ; but especially for the sick, who ought to make it their earnest desire and care. An heart-searching self-examination too will be highly necessary ; and in their performance of this important duty they will find assistance, if they earnestly solicit it, at the throne of grace.

Remarks on the fifty-first Psalm, which is expressive of David's repentance, and particularly suited to the sick.

This penitential Psalm consists of two prayers; private for ourselves, and public for the people.

In the private for ourselves there is an earnest supplication for mercy.

1. "Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences."

Then follows a petition for purifying (or sanctifying) grace.

2. "Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness; and cleanse me from my sin."

Next a confession of sins contained in the four following verses.

3. "For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me*."

4. "Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged."

5. "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me."

6. "But, lo! thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly."

The seventh and eighth verses are an act of faith in God's power and mercy; a firm persuasion that he will pardon and cleanse.

7. "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

* ————These evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly; yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to readmit the suppliant.

Milton's Sonnet Agonistes.

8. "Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

The four next verses are a prayer for those graces and favours which are now most needful for him: as, for instance, a petition for forgiveness:

9. "Turn thy face from my sins; and put out all my misdeeds."

For sanctification.

10. "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

For comfort.

11. "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

For confirmation in his good purposes.

12. "O give me the comfort of thy help again: stablish me with thy free spirit."

As these twelve verses were by way of petition, so the five next are by way of vow and promise. In the three first of which David promises moral returns, as edifying others, and glorifying God.

He promises in the thirteenth verse, that if God please to grant him the above petitions, it will engage him to convert others.

13. "Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

And in the two next that he will glorify him.

14. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health; and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness."

15. "Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord; and my mouth shall shew thy praise."

In the sixteenth verse David promises moral returns, because nothing else would be acceptable, and because no legal sacrifice was needful now. No sacrifice under the law being appointed for murder, adultery, or any wilful transgressions: if

it had, David would have offered it, however expensive.

16. "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee; but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings."

These legal sacrifices will not reconcile him after the commission of such offences.

But as moral returns were acceptable, he offers his heart to God, full of trouble that he had ever offended him.

17. "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise."

The two last verses of this Psalm respect public prayer for the people.

In the eighteenth verse David, having found grace for himself, prays for the prosperity of the people.

18. "O be favourable and gracious unto Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

In the nineteenth verse he promises public returns of praise for the mercies he had received; and his peace being made with God, he says,

19. "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations; then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar."

Though I am unworthy to do this, thy faithful servants shall bring those sacrifices thou mayest accept; and when I am reconciled to thee, I will join with them in such devout services and offerings.

Bishop Burnet's sentiments on a death-bed repentance.

Bishop Burnet, in his excellent book, entitled, *The Pastoral Care*, (page 173 of the fourth edition,) says, "A clergyman ought to give no encouragement to men, who have led a bad course of life, to

hope much from a death-bed repentance; yet he is to set them to implore the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and to do all they can to obtain his favour. But unless the sickness has been of a long continuance, and that the person's repentance, patience, and piety, have been very extraordinary during the course of it, he must be sure to give him no positive ground of hope, but leave him to the mercies of God. For there cannot be any greater treachery to souls, that is more fatal and more pernicious, than the giving quick and easy hopes, upon so short, so forced, and so imperfect a repentance. It not only makes those persons perish securely themselves, but it leads all about them to destruction, when they see one, of whose bad life and late repentance they have been the witnesses, put so soon in hopes, nay, by some unfaithful guides, made sure of salvation. This must make them go on very secure in their sins, when they see how small a measure of repentance sets all right at last. All the order and justice of a nation would be presently dissolved, should the howlings of criminals and their promises work on juries, judges, and princes: so the hopes that are given to death-bed penitents must be the most effectual means to root out the sense of religion from the minds of all who see it; therefore, though no dying man is to be driven to despair, and left to die obstinate in his sins; yet if we love the souls of our people, if we set a due value on the blood of Christ, and if we are touched with any sense of the honour or interests of religion, we must not say any thing that may encourage others, who are but too apt of themselves to put all off to the last hour. We can give them no hopes from the nature of the Gospel covenant; yet after all, the best thing a dying man can do is to repent. If he recover, that may be the seed and beginning of a new life, and a new nature in him: nor do we know the measure of the riches of

God's grace and mercy, how far he may think fit to exert it beyond the conditions and promises of the new covenant, at least to the lessening of such a person's misery in another state. We are sure he is not within the new covenant; and since he has not repented according to the tenor of it, we dare not, unless we betray our commission, give any hopes beyond it*.

Dr. Assheton's sentiments on a death-bed repentance.

When (says Dr. Assheton, page 45 and 46 of his *Death-bed Repentance*†) you visit sick beds, and hear a poor dying creature lamenting his sins with tears, and most earnestly begging pardon for the sake of Jesus Christ; when you observe how passionately he resolves, that, if God will but spare him, he will become a new man, and never be guilty of such extravagance; what do you say or do in such a case? Nay, what must such a wicked man do, who, having lived in sin, shall thus happen to be surprised by death? Dare you be so uncharitable as to declare that he is past hope; that there is no remedy, but that he will certainly be damned?

I answer, that I dare not presume to limit God, whose mercies are infinite. In such a case I will not censure him, but admonish and instruct him to the best of my judgment and abilities. I will exhort the dying sinner to remember his sins, to bewail them, to beg pardon for them, to form firm re-

* By this quotation it is evident, that Bishop Burnet had no opinion of a convert of a week's standing, nor of any such accounts given by well-meaning but ill-judging attendants on the sick. Dean Sherlock, in his treatise on death, has the same sentiments of these death-bed conversions. See Sherlock on Death, the latter end of his fourth chapter. All such notions of a sudden death-bed repentance seem to them to have no solid foundation in the Gospel.

† See a treatise on a death-bed repentance, by the judicious Dr. Assheton, Rector of Beckenham, in Kent.

solutions of amendment, and (where there is occasion) to make restitution; and, having prayed earnestly for him, and recommended him to God's mercy, do I then say such a one will be damned? No, I dare not. But do I say he shall be saved? No, I cannot. What then do I resolve? What do I determine in this matter? I will be silent, and determine nothing; for, as I dare not flatter him into a false and groundless presumption, so neither would I sink him into the horror of despair. I say, I will determine nothing; I will judge nothing before the time. All that I can do in this dark intricate case is to commend him to the extraordinary mercy of God, to which we must leave some singular cases, not knowing what to judge of them ourselves. Possibly it may please God to let this dying sinner be a signal example of his unlimited power and prerogative to save beyond all ordinary rules. Whether it may be thus, or thus, I dare not determine. What God can do from the fullness of his power or prerogative, is not for us mortals to dispute.

However, I must be so faithful to my ministerial office, as to admonish this dying sinner, that the Gospel (by the laws of which we are to be judged) expressly declares, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," and that Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto them (and to them only) who obey him. (Heb. v. 9.) When therefore the sick man has been vicious and extravagant all his life long, if God accepts his dying resolutions, it is more than he has promised*, and it is more than he has given his ministers power to preach and declare.

* But if, which is not often the case, he be a true penitent, (of the sincerity of whose repentance God alone, who knows the secrets of all hearts, can be a judge,) there is reason to hope he will find mercy.

Helps for forming a true judgment of a death-bed repentance.

As repentance is a change of heart from an evil to a good disposition, no man can justly be called a true penitent till his heart be thus changed; and whenever that change is made, repentance is certainly complete.

Now there is reason to conclude God will consider that life as amended, which would have been amended if he had spared it. Repentance in the sight of man cannot be known but by its fruits. The only way man can judge is by the rule Christ himself has given us; "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. vii. 20.)

But God, our great Creator, sees the fruit in the blossom or in the seed. He, and he only, knows those resolutions, which are fixed; those conversions, which would be lasting; and will receive such as are qualified by holy desires for works of righteousness, without exacting from them these outward duties, which the shortness of their lives hindered them from performing.

All therefore a minister can do is to recommend a death-bed penitent to the mercy of God: but it is impossible for him to pronounce what will be his state in another world.

SECTION VI.

HELPS FOR CONVERSATION ON DEATH AND ETERNITY.

Helps for conversing on a general view of Death.

1.

DEATH is the separation of the soul from the body.

It must be left in the grave, a prey to corruption and worms.

It will be raised in corruption.
 It has been the instrument of sin.
 It has been the subject of diseases.
 It is the prison of the soul.

2.

Death is a departure from this world.

A real Christian will not value the world over-much.

He considers himself as a pilgrim here, and the world as an inn. "Your fathers, where are they?"

He leaves his wife and children in the hands of a good and gracious God; and in the hope of meeting them again to part no more.

3.

Death is an entrance into another world.

A real Christian dies in the faith, fear, and love of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and in submission to his will.

He leaves mortal for immortal friends.

He dies in the Lord, because he has lived in the Lord; he dies happy, because he has lived holy.

He shall rest from his labour, sin, sorrow, and death.

He shall be admitted into the joy of his Lord.

Death is certain; life very uncertain. How little then is to be expected from life; and how much is it our duty and wisdom to set our affections above, where only is true and lasting happiness! Here our friends die; our comforts fail; our hopes vanish; our promises to ourselves remain unsatisfied. There is nothing durable and fit for our portion on earth. "Arise, therefore, and depart, for this is not your rest: it is polluted." Micah ii. 10.

Helps for conversing with the sick on the fears of death.

To talk of death, and really to die, are two very different things: to view death as an awful mes-

senger from God, actually approaching with his open commission in one hand, and his uplifted dart to execute it in the other, (an expecting grave and eternal judgment in his immediate train,) is as different, as to view a lion painted on the sign at an inn, and really to hear his tremendous roar, and to see his rolling eyes as he fiercely advances to devour us.

He who is not prepared for death, has just cause to fear it; but he who is reconciled to it by faith, repentance, and renewed obedience, and so qualified for the enjoyment of heaven, has no just cause to fear death.

The fear of death proceeds either from the pangs or the consequences of it.

1. If from the pangs of it, consider, that many suffer greater pains in some part of their lives. We submit to present pain in hope of future ease; as in the amputation of a limb, or cutting for the stone, &c. A few mortal pangs will cure us of all diseases, and recover us to everlasting happiness.

2. If our fear of death proceed from the consequences of it, they are dreadful, indeed to the impenitent.

Daily meditate on mortality and immortality, and earnestly pray and strive to have your follies and weaknesses die before you. Consider, that the natural heat necessary for the preservation of the body daily consumes it.

Death, though terrible to nature, seen with an eye of faith, is disrobed of its terrors, and clothed with its comforts. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 57. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours." Rev. xiv. 13. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." Heb. iv. 9.

O blessed time! when "mortality shall be swallowed up of life;" (2 Cor. v. 4.) and death and

sorrow shall be no more ! when we shall be eased of all our pains ; resolved of all our doubts ; be purged from all our sins ; be freed from all our fears ; be happy beyond our hopes ; and have all this happiness secured to us beyond the power of time and change. (See Archbishop Tillotson's Sermon on an heavenly Conversation, from Phil. iii. 20.)

The consideration of having endeavoured to imitate Christ, and of being "purified through faith in him," (Acts xv. 9.) may exclude all reasonable doubts and disquieting fears of death, though it may not all transient suspicions and jealousies : and such an assurance as this, bad as the world is, many have actually obtained. Perhaps there is not a greater or more important truth than "that in proportion as our faith in the Redeemer increases, so our fear of death proportionably decreases." They, who are endowed with such dispositions, are capable of relishing heaven after death, and are consequently in a fit state to die.

Helps for conversing with the sick on a comfortable view of death.

By death you will be freed from many infirmities, diseases, and pains, to which your frail body is now exposed.

By death you will get rid of misfortunes and treachery, (sometimes too under the mask of friendship,) and you will no more see innocence sacrificed to iniquity, nor the poor, as they too often are, most grievously oppressed by hard-hearted wretches, who have the power over them.

At death all your doubts will vanish : "You shall know as you are known," (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) "and put off this body of sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) You will leave a world, in which you cannot live without in some degree offending God.

By death you will leave the untoward company of men ; too many of whom seem "to have taken

“counsel against the Lord and his Anointed,” (Ps. ii. 2.) to subvert his throne, and not to have him to rule over them.

By death you will be enabled to form intimate connections with happy spirits *, to behold the patriarchs and the prophets, and to have communion with the blessed God himself, and the great Redeemer. (Heb. xii. 22.) If the conversation of a wise and experienced Christian here below is so pleasing and comfortable to one who loves our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, how delightful will heaven be to him, which is full of the spirit of just men made perfect, over whom Christ himself condescends graciously to preside, and where “the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick; and the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” Isai. xxxiii. 24.

You are saved from eternal death; and even the sting of temporal death is taken away. It is no article of the new covenant that you shall not die the death of the body: you expect it, you submit to it, as an order of justice, a dispensation of wisdom, and an appointment of goodness; for death is the gate to heaven, and the serious remembrance of death will be the means of your preparation for heaven. You see that your time here is passing away apace, and you feel your weakness and mortality.

Such a meditation on death will give you a peace unknown to the world, and which nothing on earth can give.

Helps for conversing with the sick in regard to eternity.

Diseases, pains, and the confinement of a sick bed,

* The Chevalier Ramsay says, “that souls only make acquaintance here below: it is above that their union is consummated.” May we spend our few remaining days in such a manner, that our death may be our passage to a joyful resurrection, to a blessed and eternal life.

will give you leisure to consider eternity, and to take care of your soul, which in the time of health and prosperity the generality are too apt to neglect. At such a season as this perhaps you may recollect the former passages of your life, and find time for these or the like thoughts.

What am I? Whence came I? Who gave me my being? For what end and reason was I born? What have I done? How have I behaved myself since I came into the world? I am now going to leave it. To what place then, into what unknown regions, shall I next remove? Where, O where shall I make my unalterable eternal abode*?

Think on *death* and *eternity*. That is a thought which at once disarms pleasure of all its allurements, and pain of all its terrors. Repeat these words, *death* and *eternity*: pause awhile: see how all the glories of this world shrink into nothing.

If these thoughts be daily improved, they may by the goodness of God, the concurrence of his Holy Spirit, and your own zealous endeavours, be an introduction, through the merits and mediation of our blessed Lord, to an happy eternity. Be not therefore fretful and impatient, nor murmur and repine; for God, who best knows what will be for your real good, has sent this sickness to awaken and reform you. Examine your conscience; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still; and make your peace with God before you go hence, and launch into a boundless eternity.

- ——— Say, hast thou coolly thought?
Hast thou e'er dar'd to meditate on death?
Some there are who can talk nobly of it,
But when the trial comes they start and stand aghast.
Hast thou considered what may happen after it,
What can sustain thee in that hour of terror,
How thy account may stand, and what to answer?

ROWE.

Nor love thy life, nor hate, but what thou liv'st
Live well : how long or short permit to Heaven,
And patiently attend thy dissolution.

Milton's Paradise Lost, book xi.

*The Conversation of a late eminent Christian in London
with some of his relations, on their taking leave of him
to go into the country.*

" Our health is no more at our command than length of days. Mine seems drawing fast towards a conclusion. But I am content with every allotment of Providence ; for they are all in wisdom, unerring wisdom.

" There is *one thing needful*, which, as an arm underneath, bears up and supports me ; and, though the rolling tempestuous billows surround me, yet my head is kept above them, and my feet are firmly established. O seek it, press after it, lay fast hold of this one, this main thing.

" Though painful my nights, and wearisome my days, yet I am preserved in patience and resignation. Death has no terrors, nor will the grave have any victory. My soul triumphs over death, hell, and the grave.

" Husbands and wives, parents and children, health and riches, must all go. Disappointment is another name for them.

" I should have been thankful, had I been able to have attended where I have so often been refreshed with the conversation of pious men ; but it is otherwise allotted. The Lord knows best what is best for us : I am content, and resigned to his will.

" I feel a foretaste of the joy which is to come ; and who would wish to change such a state of mind ? As I have lived so shall I die with the most unshaken assurance, that *I have not followed cunningly devised fables*, but the pure, living, eternal substance.

"Let the aged be strong, the middle-aged, instance, mated; and the youth encouraged; for the aged, with Sion, the Lord will bless Sion."

"If I am now to be removed (as I apprehend I soon shall) out of Christ's church militant, where I have endeavoured in some measure to fill up my duty, I have an evidence that I shall gain admittance into his glorious church triumphant, far above the heavens."

"My dear love to all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Farewell."

Helps for conversing with a sick person, in order to animate him to honour God by his dying behaviour.

I could wish, that, for the credit of Christianity, your own comfort, and the edification of your surviving friends, you may die not only safely, but honourably. You have your senses free in your passage out of this world into the next; whereas the force of your distemper might have deprived you of them: I shall therefore propose some plain directions in regard to your dying behaviour.

1. I would advise you to divest your mind of all earthly cares.
2. To renew your humiliation before God, and application to the blood of Christ.
3. To exercise patience under pain of body, and sorrow of mind.
4. To bear an honourable testimony to religion on leaving the world.
5. To give a solemn charge to surviving friends; especially recommending holiness and faith in Christ.
6. To keep the promises of God in view.
7. And to commit the departing spirit to God in the genuine exercises of gratitude and repentance, faith and charity*.

* See an enlargement on each of these particulars, with a sufficient meditation and prayer, in Dr. Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*

Helps for an application of the promises of Scripture, recommended to the sick and dying, by way of self-examination, and of prayer for their fulfilment.

There is a wide difference whether we read the Scripture chapter after chapter in a formal manner, without any self-application or prayer, only believing in general that it is the word of God; or whether we seriously weigh the contents; submit in every point, how contrary soever to our corrupt inclinations; and embrace with faith that patience, comfort, and blessed hope of everlasting life, it was designed to give. I have therefore earnestly and repeatedly recommended to my parishioners and others, when they read the Scriptures, to examine themselves by the passages they read, and then turn them into a prayer.

As for instance, examine yourself by this text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) Do I seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness as my first and principal concern? And do I believe that all necessary things will be added unto me? Then turn it into a prayer: Grant, I beseech thee, O Lord, that I may be enabled first (and above every other consideration) to seek thy kingdom and thy righteousness; and that all necessary things may be added unto me, as our blessed Lord has here promised to those who seek God, and depend on him.

In like manner sick and dying Christians may for their comfort and support examine themselves by the promises of God; and then pray that they

of Religion in the Soul. A book, which is so highly esteemed as to have passed through eleven editions; and which I cannot sufficiently recommend, especially to every sick person. It is a body of practical divinity and Christian experience. Dr. Doddridge said to an intimate friend, "I never think on death, but joy and triumph spring up in my heart."

may be fulfilled in themselves. As for instance, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. xli. 10.) Do you believe this promise? If so, then be comforted by it, and pray, "Lord, increase my faith in it!" If you do not believe it, then pray to God to strengthen your faith by his grace, and to support you with the comfort of believing this promise.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me." (Psal. xxiii. 4.) Do I fear no evil, even in the prospect of death? If you do not, be thankful to God for it, and pray, "Be thou with me, O Lord; may thy rod and staff comfort me."

"My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." (Ps. lxxiii. 26.) Has God been my strength, and is he now so? Have I taken him for my portion, and have I now this hope? Then pray, "O be it unto thy servant according unto thy word."

"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 57.) Am I thankful for this? Grant me, O Lord, the victory according to thy promise.

By such an examination and prayer these promises may revive the heart, when no cordial can support the sinking body.

Helps for an examination by Scriptural promises, with some directions to prevent the misapplication of them.

You should examine yourself by the promises of God, which you may properly apply to yourself when you answer from the heart these questions. Do you value these promises as your best treasure? Do you venture all your hopes of salvation on them? Are you anxious to know your personal in-

terest in them? Do you frequently meditate on them? Do you often plead them in prayer; especially under your burdens of conscious guilt and pollution, and in seasons of affliction and temptation? This is the way to honour God, whose promises they are, and the Redeemer, by whose blood they are sealed; and consequently it is the most effectual way to secure peace to our own souls. Why else does the prophet Isaiah say, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." (Isai. xxvi. 3.) Was not this the way in which Abraham's faith discovered both its excellent nature and happy tendency? "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Rom. iv. 20.)

There are too many who call themselves Christians, who greatly sin by neglecting divine promises, and not applying them as they ought to do. They are more prone to distrust God and Christ than themselves. They do not consider that comfortable declaration of St. Peter, that "God has given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of a divine nature." (2 Pet. i. 4.) They lose their sense of the preciousness of the promises, and are valuing something else as their treasure. They are honouring with their confidence the word of mortal man more than the word of the living God. They are slothful and negligent about their interest in Christ, but zealous in securing the interests of time and sense. Divine promises are to them like things forgotten and out of mind: and to plead them earnestly is inconsistent with the cold and formal temper of their prayers. No wonder the faith of such is little and staggering, ever incline to call in question the truth and faithfulness of God and the power and grace of Christ. They affront God and Christ by making light of divine pro-

mises; and the indignity is justly resented, and plainly punished, by his "sending leanness into "their souls." Ps. cvi. 15.

It was the constant rule of an eminent divine to be very cautious how he applied any of the Scriptural promises; which he never did till he thoroughly knew the state of those to whom he applied them; and then only conditionally: as for instance, if you have performed the conditions which are required of you on your part, God will perform the promises which he has made on his part. The true Christian may take any promise, and apply to himself the comfort resulting from it, if through grace he can discern in himself that peculiar character to which the promise is made. Does the Christian perceive himself brought to such a sensibility of his own meanness, dependence, and guilt, as to be "poor in spirit?" If he does, he may with a confidence, which is perfectly consistent with the deepest humility, pronounce himself blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is his own. (Matt. v. 3.) Is it his constant endeavour and fervent prayer to be "pure in heart," and his real grief to have any impure thought or affection enter there? If it be, then blessed is he, for he shall "see God," and eternally enjoy a God of unspotted purity and affection. (Matt. v. 8.) But if the nominal Christian try himself either by the character of spiritual poverty or purity of heart, he will find that, instead of spiritual poverty, his mind is intoxicated with an apprehension of his own worthiness and self-sufficiency. And instead of purity of heart, he cannot avoid this consciousness, that his heart has entertained unclean thoughts and affections; nor was he ever displeased with their entrance or their continuance there. Thus the further he goes in his self-examination as to his right to claim the promises, the more apparently these promises speak a curse to him rather than a bless-

ing, because he is altogether destitute of the peculiar characters to which the promises are made.

By this manner of self-examination we shall find that every promise in Scripture (whether of a more general or particular kind and nature) has a manifest tendency to produce the satisfaction so much desired by the true Christian concerning his interest in Christ; but that it has likewise a tendency to produce self-condemnation in the heart of a nominal Christian. It certainly is not God's design in the promises to distribute blessings promiscuously. Their bright side, like the cloud in the wilderness, is towards the Israelites, at the same time that they spread darkness before the Egyptians. Certainly, when the promises meet not with those who are entitled to them, they are turned into dreadful curses.

“Him that cometh to me, says our Lord, I will “in no wise cast out;” and, on the contrary, him that cometh not to me, I will most certainly cast out. And in this manner all the promises may properly be applied.

I have been more particular on this point, because it has frequently given me great concern to read narratives of sudden and improbable conversions of the sick, and likewise the accounts of some condemned malefactors, who through the misapplication of the promises, the misrepresentations of the conversion of the thief on the cross, and of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, having passed into eternity with an enthusiastic joy, instead of that humility and contrition * more suited to their awful situation.

* See Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons on Eccles. xii. 1. and Heb. iii. 13.

PROMISES MADE BY GOD.

"God has given us exceeding great and precious PROMISES, that by THESE we might be partakers of a divine nature." 2 Pet. i. 4.

DIVINE TEACHING.

"The eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity." Isai. xxix. 18.

"They shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Jer. xxxi. 34.

"The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things." John xiv. 26.

"The Lord shall guide you continually." Isai. lviii. 11.

PARDON.

"I am he, saith the Lord, who blotteth out thy transgressions." Isai. xliii. 25.

"Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Isai. i. 18.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. ii. 24.

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sins." 1 John i. 7.

JUSTIFICATION.

"It is God that justifieth." Rom. viii. 33.

"We are freely justified by his grace." Rom. iii. 21.

"In the Lord I have righteousness." Isai. xlv. 24.

"We are made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21.

SANCTIFICATION.

"I will put a new spirit within you." Ezek. xi. 19.

"Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Titus ii. 14.

"I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts." Heb. viii. 10.

"The God of peace sanctify your whole spirit, soul, and body." 1 Thess. v. 23.

TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.

"Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is." 1 Tim. iv. 8.

"Verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm xxxvii. 3.

"Seek first (and above every other consideration) the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these (necessary) things shall be added." Matt. vi. 33.

"Who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." 1 Tim. vi. 17.

TEMPTATION.

"God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." 1 Cor. x. 13.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii. 9.

"Sin shall not have dominion over thee." Rom. vi. 14.

"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke xxii. 32.

AFFLICTION.

"Happy is the man whom God correcteth." Job v. 17.

"Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion." Lam. iii. 32.

"Call upon me in trouble, and I will deliver thee." Psalm l. 15.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Rev. iii. 19.

DEATH.

"God giveth us the victory through Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 57.

"If our earthly house is dissolved, we have a building of God." 2 Cor. v. 1.

“Whosoever believeth in me (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall have everlasting life.” John iii. 16.
 “Though I pass through death, I will fear no evil.” Psalm xxiii. 4.

These promises confirmed by the oath of God.

“God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” Heb. vi. 17.

O for a strong and lasting faith,
 To credit what th' Almighty saith;
 T' embrace the message of his Son,
 And call the joys of heav'n our own;
 Whence do our doubts and fears arise?
 Why trickling sorrows drown our eyes?
 Slowly, alas! our mind receives
 The comforts which our Maker gives.

Dr. WATTS.

But as the application of these promises may be rather prejudicial than beneficial, for want of an attentive examination into such passages of Scripture as may justify the application of them to the case of any particular person, I cannot sufficiently recommend an invaluable little book, suited to this purpose, entitled, *A Collection of the Promises of God under their proper Heads*, by Dr. Samuel Clark; the Introduction to which contains not only observations on the excellency and use of the promises, but some directions for the right application of them.

Ejaculations to be used by one who is sick and dying; or they may be put up in his behalf by any of the attendants, only by changing I into he or her, me into him or her.

May I be a-follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Heb. vi. 12.

“ Whether I live may I live unto the Lord ; or
 “ whether I die may I die unto the Lord : whether
 “ therefore I live, or whether I die, may I be the
 “ Lord’s.” Rom. xiv. 8.

God be merciful to me a sinner.

Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

Be with me through the valley of the shadow of death.

May God be gracious to me, and support me.

Graciously look upon my afflictions.

Favourably with mercy hear my prayers.

Lord, increase my faith.

Dust I am, and unto dust I must return.

Thy will be done, particularly in me and by me.

Forsake me not, O God, now my strength faileth me.

Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.

When absent from the body, may I be present with the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 8.

Make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting.

Help thy servant, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood.

I believe thou shalt come to be my judge.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.

Into thy hands I commend my spirit. Ps. xxxi. 5.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Acts vii. 59.

Copy of a letter sent by a minister from Amsterdam to his friend, a clergyman in England, giving an account of the exemplary death of that eminent servant of God, Mr. Longueville, minister of the English church at Amsterdam, who died there February 7, 1776.

REVEREND SIR,

Your kind letter enquiring about the state of Mr. Longueville’s health came to my hand yesterday ;

and, had it come a few days sooner, it might have been communicated to him before he entered into his Master's joy. But now, alas ! all that remains to us of that great and good man is the cold and breathless body, which lies waiting for interment.

After enduring manifold tribulations, and maintaining a long but successful struggle, he obtained that rest, which remaineth for the people of God, on Wednesday evening, about seven o'clock.

By this dispensation of Divine Providence, the English congregation here have lost one of the most useful and faithful pastors, who has, perhaps, at any time existed in the Christian church. I have lost a colleague, and not a colleague only, but a counsellor and a guide, a father and a friend.

Although a foreigner and a stranger here, his eminent character as a private Christian, and as a minister of Christianity, is so universally known, that his death is lamented by all ranks.

He was truly a burning and a shining light, and his ministrations have been greatly blessed by God, to the good of many.

As his life was exemplary, so his death has been edifying and instructive.

I had the honour to attend him for several days and nights when he was upon his death-bed, and to assist him in his last moments ; and I must own that, during this solemn occasion, I found stronger evidence of the truth of Christianity, and more conviction in my own heart, than can be found from the arguments and proofs given by divines, either ancient or modern.

He retained his senses and understanding entire to the very last moment, and reasoned on the truth and excellence of the Gospel with such energy, clearness, and strength of argument, that the weeping by-standers were filled with delight and amazement. Indeed, the celestial joys which darted in upon his mind served to wipe away the

tears from our eyes. His farewell address to his dear wife, his children, his grand-children, his colleague, and the servants of his family, all standing together by his bedside, was such a scene of grandeur and awful solemnity, and attended with such a variety of circumstances so moving and pathetic, that I was never witness to the like.

His dying instructions to me, (delivered with a pathos and an earnestness which pierced my very soul,) his anxiety for our flock, and his extreme concern for the poor of it, shall never drop from my remembrance.

When he perceived his last end to be nearly approaching, he composed himself a little to rest, in order to acquire as much strength as might enable him to recommend to us the important concerns of religion; and he performed this last duty with such dignity and composure, such noble elevation of soul, as brought to our remembrance the words of our great Lord, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." Luke xxiii. 28.

About twenty minutes before he expired we prayed by his bed-side, and after the prayer was done, he returned me thanks in distinct and articulate words.

Thus, Reverend Sir, I have given you a short account of the dying behaviour of my dear and much beloved colleague. I shall only just acquaint you, that on the Sabbath (the 17th of December) he was seized with his last illness in the pulpit, near the conclusion of the service; and he had been confined to his house ever since. His complaints arose entirely from the stone and gravel. About the middle of January he seemed to be greatly recovered; but it so pleased the supreme Disposer of all events, that he relapsed again; and about ten days before he died, was seized with a kind of pleuritic fever, which, in conjunction with the original disease, brought on his dissolution. He

died on the 7th of February, and it is remarkable that on the 7th of February he received his call to be minister of this church thirty-six years ago.

As I was no stranger to the friendship between my worthy colleague and you, Sir, I thought it would not be unacceptable to you if I returned so full an answer to your letter. I sincerely recommend you and all your concerns to the blessing of God, not doubting of your wishes and prayers in behalf of an afflicted fellow-servant, a fatherless family, and a sorrowful congregation. I remain with much esteem,

Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,
N. C.

Amsterdam, Feb. 12, 1776.

SECTION VII.

HELPS FOR CONVERSING WITH SUCH OF THE SICK AS ARE FIT TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT, AND A CAUTION AGAINST GIVING IT IN TIME OF SICKNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT IN A FIT STATE TO RECEIVE IT.

A caution against giving the Sacrament to improper persons.

TOO many who have led a careless, and perhaps wicked life will, when they apprehend themselves in danger of dying, send for the minister to give them the Sacrament: this they consider (strange infatuation!) as a passport on the road to heaven, which they expect will answer their purpose at once: but, alas! they will not find that the way of salvation, prescribed in the Gospel, is so easy as they absurdly imagine it to be. Ministers should be cautious therefore to whom they administer the Sacrament. Some make it a general rule not to give it to such sick persons as would not receive it in

health, unless they can bring them to a due sense of their guilt; to an hearty repentance of all that is past, with sincere resolutions of amendment, should they recover; and to a determination to make every kind of restitution in their power, if there be any whom they have injured: for till strong proofs have been given that they are brought to such a disposition, there is no warrant in Scripture, nor by the Rubric, for administering the Sacrament to them; as the Rubric expressly enjoins the minister, “to examine whether the sick person has truly repented of his sins; is in charity with all mankind; forgives all who have offended him; and has actually recompensed, or solemnly promised to recompense, as soon and as far as in his power, the parties to whom he has done any injury or wrong;” till, therefore, you are fully satisfied of this, it is your duty to reprove such persons, and to refuse them the Sacrament. Yet (as Bishop Burnet has observed in his *Pastoral Care*, page 172) “the worst of men may be reprovèd in so soft a manner, that, if they be not reclaimed, they shall not be irritated, or made worse by it; which is but too often the effect of an indiscreet reproof. By mild and prudent reproofs a minister perhaps may save the sinner’s soul; he is at least sure not to endanger his own by a culpable conduct towards his people,” and by a prostitution of so solemn and important an ordinance, as the holy Sacrament most certainly is.

Helps for conversing with a real Christian, who in his sickness is desirous of receiving the Sacrament.

Your desire is both commendable and reasonable, because it is your highest privilege, a fundamental duty of the Christian religion, and peculiarly proper for you, who by the grace of God have been brought into that heavenly disposition, which you have manifested, particularly during

your sickness ; because it is God's seal (or confirmation) of pardon to you, and to all who receive it with repentance and faith ; because it will fortify you against the fears of death, by setting before you Christ crucified, who suffered on the cross for you, and thus disarmed death of its sting ; because it assures you of your resurrection from the dead, by making you a member of Christ's body* ; because if it be received (as it undoubtedly will) with true devotion, the comfortable assurances of God's love in Christ, with which you here meet, will never leave you till you see God face to face, " being presented by our Lord Jesus Christ faultless, " before the presence of his glory." Jude, ver. 24.

Helps for conversing with the sick on the valuable purposes which may be answered by the frequent remembrance of Christ at the sacramental table.

It will confirm your faith in him.

It will promote your humility and godly sorrow.

It will excite your gratitude to such a Saviour.

It will increase your love to Christ, and hatred of sin, for the expiation of which he suffered crucifixion.

It will promote your obedience to his commands, and your imitation of his example.

It will support you in sickness, and amidst all the difficulties and sufferings of life.

It will confirm your faith in the divine promises of mercy to pardon, and grace to help you.

It will promote love to all your fellow-creatures.

It will make you zealous for his cause and interest in the world.

It will lead your thoughts upwards to the world where he is gone.

It will reconcile you to a dying bed.

* See the promises of this, John vi. 54.

It will confirm your expectation of a glorious resurrection and everlasting felicity.

These are some of the happy consequences of a serious and devout attendance at the Sacrament, considered in the view of a remembrance of Christ.

Here I shall suggest three different methods of self-examination before the reception of the Sacrament, suited to the different situations of those who intend to communicate.

I. The first of which is the consideration of it, as a comfortable and strengthening* ordinance suited for general use, but principally for those who have been accustomed to view it as a renewal of the baptismal covenant, as the forgiveness of sins, and as the means of obtaining comfort, by pleading the merits and promises of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. As for instance, you should consider the Sacrament as a memorial of Christ's dying for you. How comfortable to remember your deliverance from satan, sin, and hell !

2. You should consider it as an assuring sign, not only as the remembrance of your redemption from sin, and reconciliation to God, but as a seal and pledge of his pardon and favour. How refreshing such an assurance !

3. You should consider it likewise as a renewal of your covenant with God, and a solemn pleading before him the merits and promises of Christ. Who, that is conscious of his many breaches of this covenant, and of his great need of the merits of Christ, can be indifferent about them !

4. You should further consider it in its happy effects, as the use of this ordinance comforts and strengthens the soul. It is the proper means of obtaining comfort and strength from God to sup-

* See the late Bishop of London (Dr. Gibson) on the Sacrament, page 82, fifth edition. A very judicious little tract, well deserving a perusal.

port and quicken you in your spiritual welfare. How desirable, how delightful to partake of it !

II. Another method of self-examination before the Sacrament is expressed in the words of the Church Catechism, as to what is required of communicants to qualify them for an approach to the Lord's table.

This second method is particularly suitable to all those who have neither leisure nor capacity to read sacramental books ; and consequently they have formed no other notions of it than those they had learned in the Church Catechism, when they were at school as boys and girls. Some perhaps have never been put to school, and cannot read ; to such as these this method of examination will be short and plain, so that they may easily learn it by heart, if any well-disposed person, from a principle of compassion and benevolence, would frequently repeat it to them, and so impress it strongly on the memory.

1. *Do you repent truly of your former sins, and stedfastly purpose to lead a new life ?*

“ Cease to do evil ; learn to do well.” Isaiah i. 16.

“ Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” Luke xiii. 3.

Without sincere resolutions of leading a new and holy life, your repentance is imperfect, and will not avail.

You must pray daily for the help of the Holy Spirit, to enable you to keep these resolutions.

2. *Have you a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ ?*

“ Without faith,” says the apostle, “ it is impossible to please God ; for he who cometh to him must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.” Heb. xi. 6.

M

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me," says Christ, John xiv. 1.

It must be a lively faith and active; it must work in you such an obedience to God's commands as Christ has enjoined in the Gospel.

Faith is necessary to salvation, because the hope of sinners is entirely founded on the mercy of God through Christ, who sealed to us this mercy by his death.

3. *Have you a thankful remembrance of Christ's death?*

"Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 20.

You must be thankful, because the blessings promised in the covenant of grace are so valuable, so necessary, and so freely given.

You should remember with gratitude and joy the death of Christ, as the means of procuring these blessings.

4. *Are you in charity with all men?*

"If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John iv. 11.

You must be in charity with all men; that is, love all men; forgive those who have offended you; ask forgiveness of those whom you have offended; and make restitution to any you have wronged. If you harbour malice and resentment in your heart, you are not in a fit state either to live or die.

✠ The Sacrament is given to you on a supposition that your faith and repentance are sincere; and if this condition fail in you, the action of giving it you, though by the most exemplary minister, and in the most solemn manner, will never save you.

III. The third method is not only more com-

prehensive than either of the former, but it contains some important examinations in regard to a profitable behaviour after having received the Sacrament.

Helps for conversing on the design of the Sacrament, the preparation for receiving it, and behaviour after it.

As you desire to receive the Sacrament, I would beg you seriously to consider what follows.

•Receiving the Sacrament can be of no real service unless it be attended with

A lively faith in Christ, Heb. xi. 6.

An unfeigned repentance for all your sins, Luke xiii. 3.

And sincere purposes of renewed obedience, Heb. v. 9. particularly a renewal of the baptismal and sacramental covenant.

As these are the indispensable terms required of all who receive the Sacrament, they ought to be seriously considered.

The design of this ordinance.

On the principles of faith, repentance, and renewed obedience, it is to be regarded,

As a remembrance.	}	Of what?	Christ's sufferings in character, in soul, in body, for our sakes.
As a seal, or confirmation.		Of what?	Blessings purchased, Pardon of sins, Gift of the Holy Spirit, Eternal life.
As a mark or badge.	}	Of what?	Being fellow-members of Christ's body *, Children of one Father, Redeemed by one Saviour, Heirs of one and the same glory.

* See 1 Cor. xi. 12. Ephes. v. 30.

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The preparation for this ordinance.

As a remembrance. } Are you grieved for having forgot Christ?
Are you determined to recollect and remember him more constantly and affectionately for the future?

As a seal, or confirmation. } Do you know what are the blessings to be sealed to you?
Are you sensible of your want of them?
Do you hunger and thirst after them?

As a mark or badge. } Do you love all sincere Christians of every rank and party, because they are dear to Christ, and redeemed by his love?
Are you willing to forgive all who have offended or injured you, because God, for Christ's sake, is willing to forgive you?
If any remainder of resentment, ill-will, or envy, still lurks in your heart, are these your burden and misery, what you lament, strive against, and from which you long to be delivered? For it is by this mark (or love to another) "that all men shall know that ye are my disciples." John xiii. 35.

Examine yourself by these questions, as in the presence of God; and when you can answer them in the affirmative, your heart (treacherous as it is) will not I hope deceive you. You will then be

properly prepared for this ordinance. For such as you Christ purchased all these blessings: to such as you the Gospel promises them: and to you they will be confirmed, and sealed in this ordinance.

Helps for conversing with the sick (or others) in regard to a suitable behaviour after having received the Sacrament.

This is of great importance, for it is as much your duty to be altogether as careful to improve the Sacrament *after* you have received, as to prepare yourself for it *before* you receive. You cannot urge this to yourself too earnestly, or on others too affectionately.

For want of this care afterwards, the Sacrament is, alas! to too many an hasty dash from a summer's cloud, which is dried up almost as soon as it falls: whereas by this continued, this renewed improvement, that holy ordinance may, like a copious stream, be running on with a steady and persevering flow, to refresh your hearts, and to make the whole of your conversation fruitful in every word, work, and temper.

Observe not only on the day you have received the Sacrament, but on every day of every week after you have been a partaker of this holy communion, the following directions.

1. *Meditate on Christ's sufferings.* Accustom yourself to frequent ejaculations, and to meditations on the sufferings of Christ, in character, soul, and body. By no means let the remembrance of a dying Saviour, his boundless love, public shame, and exquisite agonies, depart from your mind.

2. *Meditate on the blessings purchased by Christ.* (Namely, pardon of sin, aid of the Spirit, and eternal life.) Often comfort yourself with a review of these blessings which God has, as it were, signed and sealed for your enjoyment. Endeavour to strengthen your faith by this expedient. Use it as a cordial to revive your faith (that most important

grace) in its languishing moments, and say with the Psalmist, "Why art thou so disquieted, O my soul?" (Psalm xliii. 5.) Why are thy trust and hope so feeble? These blessings were confirmed in the most solemn manner. God has set his own seal to your title; and "he is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent."

3. *Meditate on being a fellow-member of Christ's body.* Daily regard your fellow-creatures, under the amiable character of fellow-members of Christ, children of one Father, redeemed by one Saviour, and heirs of one and the same eternal glory. This will be an excellent method of suppressing every little animosity, of enlarging your heart, and of warming it with universal and brotherly love.

✂ It may be here asked, perhaps, How can we love such as are notoriously bad, and use us very ill? I answer; We cannot but resent such usage; and God has planted in us resentment as one necessary mean of preserving ourselves from farther injuries. "We may be angry, and yet sin not." Ephes. iv. 26.

We should consider such an one as diseased in his mind, and as an object rather of our compassion than of our hatred; and shew him the same compassion as we should if he had broken a limb, or was wounded in his body. We should moreover pray to God to heal his spiritual disease, to rescue him from the bondage of Satan, and to subdue in him the dominion of sin. We should beg of God to dispose us to a reconcilable, forgiving temper to all men, as this may qualify us for his forgiving grace to us.

But if it should be further objected by the injured, that they have received very great provocations from such or such a person, that they cannot love him, and are not in charity with him, and

therefore are not in a fit state to receive the Sacrament, I hope to remove this objection, by remarking that there are two sorts of love.

One is a love of friendship, which disposes us to desire and delight in the conversation of others.

The other is a love of benevolence, which prompts us to desire the good of others; and we should endeavour on all proper occasions to promote the good even of our enemies.

The love of friendship is not due to all men, for we are to be wise as serpents, and not to treat our enemies as our friends: this would be folly.

But the love of benevolence, (or good will,) which prompts us to desire the welfare of all men, and to endeavour to contribute to it when we can, obliges us to be just to all mankind, and consequently to our enemies. You must be faithful in all your promises to them, and just in all your dealings with them; nor must you pretend to have any right to falsify and tell lies, or to raise false or slanderous stories even of your enemy. Thus by a love of benevolence, you are obliged to be in charity with all men. Distinguish thus between these two sorts of love; and all your objections against receiving the Sacrament, on account of your dislike to those who use you ill, will at once be removed.

Some heart-searching questions should often be put to yourself between the times of your receiving the Sacrament (whether weekly or monthly) from some parts of the Communion Service, by way of examination, that you may see whether the words of your lips have been the sentiments of your heart.

Parts of the Communion Service used as a self-examination.

As for instance, in the confession of sin you repeated these words, "I earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for my misdoings." Then ask yourself, Do I repent? Am I sorry?

I confessed before God "that the remembrance of them was grievous to me?" Is this true? Was the remembrance grievous to me? Was the burden of them intolerable? Do I consider sin as an heavy burden, or were these only words of course, in repeating of which after the minister I meant nothing, and I felt nothing. Do I now perceive it was only a matter of form, a solemn mockery of God? If so, may I be more attentive to this for the future!

I said that "I desired to serve God in newness of life." But had I really any such desire? Had I any design of altering my present course of life?

Parts of the Communion Service turned into a prayer.

It may likewise be very profitable to you, if you would turn some parts of the Communion Service into prayer. As for instance; I have been exhorted "always to remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for us." God grant, that with a most grateful heart, I may continually remember this institution of the blessed Sacrament, and all the benefits obtained by our Lord's death, to my great and endless comfort?

The minister declared in the Absolution, "that God of his great mercy had promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him." I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to give me true repentance, and thy Holy Spirit; "Lord, increase my faith." May I look up to thee, O Lord, for this promised mercy to all true penitents.

I am exhorted to draw near to the sacramental table with faith, and to receive the sacred elements to my comfort. May I be enabled to draw near with a true faith, and find by my own experience that comfort and peace which this ordinance was intended to give me.

I have acknowledged, "that I do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in my own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies." May I give thee, O Lord, the glory of thy manifold and great mercies; not trusting to what I am myself, or can do to save myself; but may I rely on thine undeserved mercy. May I never approach thine awful presence with a look of confidence towards heaven, like the self-righteous Pharisee, who, blind to his own sinful state, and puffed up with pride, "thanked God that he was not as other men are:" words which implied a celebration of his own praise more than a prayer to God; but may I, with a deep humiliation as a poor sinner, like the penitent publican, plead the merits and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. May I now and ever be found repenting, believing, renouncing all self-confidence, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude, ver. 21.)

In like manner the whole Communion Service (and indeed the whole Liturgy) may from time to time be occasionally so applied to ourselves, either by way of examination, or of prayer, as to be highly beneficial to us.

Instances of a personal application of some promises in Scripture by way of examination, and prayer for the fulfilment of them. See p. 106.

Here are a few texts of Scripture selected for meditation, both before and after the Sacrament, which may be serviceable to communicants in general; particularly to those in the lower ranks of life, as servants, day-labourers, manufacturers, &c. who have little time to spare from the employment on which their subsistence depends. These texts they will find at length by turning to their Bibles, before, in, or after church. They will see likewise the connection in which these passages are recorded. These texts moreover may easily be im-

pressed on the minds of such as cannot read, if they would solicit an occasional repetition of them from those who can; and thus they may, as it were, have them strong on their memory, and ever ready for immediate use.

It is desirable that every communicant should bring with him to church a pocket Bible, which will be the best companion to the altar, and very useful for better understanding and retaining some parts of the Lessons for the day read by the minister, as well as for turning to the texts here recommended for meditation. The Common Prayer-Book likewise may be employed to advantage while others are receiving, by making a proper use of some particular Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, or suitable Psalms. As, for instance, the Collect for Ash-Wednesday; the Epistle for the Thursday before Easter, which gives an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper; the Epistle and Gospel for Good-Friday; the twenty-second and the hundred and sixteenth Psalms; the former relates to our Lord's sufferings; and in the latter "the cup of salvation" (meaning the sacrificial cup of the drink-offering, described in Numbers the twenty-eighth) may very fitly be applied to the sacramental cup; which is indeed a cup of blessing to all those who rightly partake of it.

Texts for meditation before and after Sacrament.

Before the Sacrament.

When you intend to receive the Sacrament, endeavour to keep the thoughts of your duty, and the blessings you desire, alive on your heart before you receive, by meditating on the following, or the like texts.

See Psal. li. 17. Jer. iii. 12, 13. Matt. vi. 21.

xxii. 37, 39. Gal. iii. 24. Tit. ii. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
1 John ii. 25.

After the Sacrament.

When you have received, you may meditate on the following, or the like texts.

See Matt. xi. 29. xxvi. 41. Luke xi. 13. John v. 14. xiv. 27. xvi. 23. Rom. viii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 15. vi. 16. Heb. xii. 2.

For further assistance on this important duty of meditation, see Mr. Orton's *Sacramental Meditations*, or *devout Reflections on various Passages of Scripture*; designed to assist Christians in their attendance on the Lord's Supper, and their improvement of it. Not only those who do attend, but those who have not yet attended the Sacrament, may find some advantage from the perusal of these meditations; and be induced to pay a more serious regard to their duty in this respect; and moreover those pious Christians, who are necessarily confined from it, may be assisted and refreshed by them.

SECTION VIII.

HELPS FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH A DYING PROFLIGATE, OR A CONDEMNED MALEFACTOR.

Remarks on the humanity and necessity of a minister's attendance on profligate sinners, and on the condemned.

COMMISERATION for malefactors under sentence of death will naturally engage a serious minister, whether he attends by appointment, or by his own choice, to exhort and pray with them and for them: and any one so employed, who has a just sense of the worth of immortal souls, and is sincerely desirous of serving their important in-

terests in so dangerous and critical a season, would be glad to receive any hints of what had been suggested on the like occasions, which might enforce his own exhortations. This therefore induced me to abridge the following narrative given of Mr. James MacLaine. I moreover apprehended, that the conversations of the worthy minister who attended him (if what is peculiar to the condemned were excepted) might be useful to dying profligates, or others, whose vicious hardness of heart, or penitent concern for salvation, render such alarming or comforting admonitions necessary. These conversations likewise might be useful to those (whether in sickness or health) who have not sufficiently, if at all, considered their latter end, and the repentance preparatory to it.

But perhaps some may be ready to object, “that
 “the talking of the mercies of God and the hope
 “of salvation to such wretches as these, is the way
 “to encourage others of the like depraved dispositions to follow them in the same vicious courses.” For they will argue, “if God be so gracious as to
 “forgive such enormous guilt in the last extremity, why may we not tread in their steps, and
 “take our fill of sin? If we escape the justice of
 “the law, it is well: if we suffer its utmost, we can
 “repent, even at the very gallows, and be happy
 “in another world.”

I answer. To infer that we may sin because grace abounds, is such an unnatural shocking perversion of all just reasoning, and so gross an abuse of the Divine goodness, that it can scarcely be supposed to take place in any heart but where all the power of diabolical darkness and corruption are entirely predominant. And such transgressors ought to be told, that they have no just ideas of repentance: for they will find it much more difficult than they imagined it to be; and that by so horrid a perversion of the design of God in the

proclamation of his mercy, they actually exclude themselves from all rational hope of that grace; and ought to expect nothing less than to be given up to the hardness of their hearts, as a just judgment of God upon them.

Besides, what is the natural language of this objection? "Let these wretched guilty immortals alone to perish in their sins, and be miserable for ever: let them go down quickly to the hell they have so justly deserved."

And can any one find in his heart to utter such language as this to a fellow-creature? Forbid it humanity! Forbid it Christianity!

Some of these unhappy people perhaps fell at first through weakness and inadvertency; from the want of better knowledge; or from the power of some strong temptation; and may perhaps be now lamenting their fall in the bitterness of their souls, and secretly exclaiming, "What shall I do to be saved?" And shall we withhold the glad tidings of salvation from them? God forbid.

On the other hand, shall we neglect to enforce the awful declarations of divine justice on the more hardened and impenitent? Certainly not. For even the worst of them have some remains of natural conscience, which it may please God so to awaken by such a representation of his mercies and terrors, as to lead them to a true repentance. These considerations, I trust, will justify any one in attempting to bring condemned malefactors and dying profligates to a sense of their guilt; [see page 94.] and to point out some hope of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Conversations with Mr. James MacLaine, who was executed at Tyburn on October 3, 1750, for divers robberies on the highway.*

I found him, says Dr. Allen, under inexpressible agonies of mind and conscience. I told him, I came at his request as a Christian minister, to testify to him repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he must allow me to deal plainly with him, and I hoped he would be open and ingenuous in all he said to me; which he solemnly, and as a dying man, assured me he would be.

I observed to him, that as by common report he had associated with licentious young people of figure and fortune, and it was too well known that such affected to disbelieve and despise all the principles of natural and revealed religion, I desired to know of him whether he had not fallen into the fashionable way of thinking and talking on these subjects; especially as he was conscious that his life was spent in such a manner, as to have the greatest occasion for these kind of stupifiers. He answered, that the truths of religion were deeply rooted in his mind, even when he was pursuing the most flagitious courses; that since he had robbed on the highway he never had enjoyed a calm and easy minute: he acknowledged the crime for which he was condemned.

As he acknowledged the crime for which he suffered, the justice of his sentence, and the great wickedness of his life, I thought my first endeavour was to bring him to a true penitential sense and confession of his sins. In order to do this, I observed to him, that it was very common for persons under condemnation to shew a great degree

* The account here given of him is extracted from the third edition of Dr. Allen's narrative of his behaviour after condemnation, and well worth a serious perusal.

of sorrow, but that not much stress was to be laid on this, as it had been often found when such persons escaped, that they returned to their former courses; that it was necessary for him to examine his heart, and take care that he did not deceive himself; that true repentance did not arise from a sense of legal punishment, but from a living sense of the malignity of his sins, as offensive to a pure and holy God; as breaches of his sacred law; as violations of his own conscience; as injuries to his soul; and as contrary to justice and benevolence; in which ties society was held together, and without which there would be no living with safety and comfort in the world.

He replied, I feel the weight of my crimes lying on my conscience in the views in which you have represented them. It is not death I fear; but, oh! I dread to appear in the awful presence of God! How can such a wretch as I have been hope for mercy!

I told him his fears and apprehensions were just; that it was no wonder that reflections on a life spent as his had been should be very tormenting and uneasy, and that in the views of eternity "his flesh should tremble for fear of God, and that he should be afraid of his judgments;" that in these humiliations, the religion of all sinners, especially of such as himself, must begin; and I entreated him to think of this well. If you can be sincerely penitent, you may, through the merits and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, be forgiven; but, for God's sake, don't deceive yourself. It is impossible for me to know your heart; and the circumstances in which you now are make it difficult for you yourself to know it: search it therefore to the bottom, and seriously enquire what sorrow you have for your sins, abstracted from the shameful untimely end to which they have brought you: consider that only is "godly sorrow, and worketh

“repentance unto salvation,” which would never be counteracted, supposing your life was to be saved.

He acknowledged that he felt the force of what I mentioned, and that he had often a jealousy of himself arising from that consideration; but he added, if the utmost abhorrence of myself for my past wicked life, if the deepest sense of my ingratitude to God, my most bountiful Benefactor, of my wilful transgressions of his laws, of the violations of my conscience, (which in the height of my wickedness was not hardened,) if indignation at myself for the injuries I have done my fellow-creatures, and the distress I have brought on my worthy relations, if these (abstracting from all I am to suffer in this world) are marks of true repentance, I hope I am a penitent sinner. I have, it is true, but a little time to live, and cannot shew the sincerity of my repentance by many instances of the fruit of it; but if I know any thing of my own heart I can truly say, that if I have a desire of living, it does not arise from any consideration so much, as that it would give me an opportunity of fulfilling those holy resolutions I have formed.

In another conversation with him I took occasion to talk over the parable of the prodigal son, in which I thought there was something peculiarly suitable to his circumstances: O Sir! said I, “you have taken your journey into a far country,” far from the way in which you were trained up by a pious father, far from the way in which I understand you have often been counselled by your worthy brother, and have “spent your substance among harlots, in riotous living, in gaming, in public diversions,” in expensive and sordid (though too fashionable) pleasures; and, when your own substance did not supply your extravagancies, you have made cruel inroads into the substance and property of others.

It is true, said he, it is true: this is an emblem of what my life was for some years: such a prodigal have I been.

I then said, O let me, Sir, carry your thoughts farther into the parable, and beg you to consider to what this course of life has brought you. Your circumstances are like a "mighty famine in the land, and you more than begin to see yourself in want." All the companions of your loose hours desert you: they now slink away, hide their faces from you, give you up to the justice of the law, (though they once flattered you with the hopes of getting you a pardon,) and are ashamed to have it thought they ever knew you. Indeed, their visits now would but distract you, and give you a keener sense of the misery of your condition. Could they even save your life, they could not restore your lost name and character, much less could they restore your innocence, peace of mind, and a good conscience.

He replied, Your words, Sir, are true; O they strike like daggers to my heart: and after a violent burst of tears he said, My love of pleasure and of a gay appearance have undone me.

As soon as I found his mind a little composed, I told him that I did not make these representations merely to terrify him, but to give him as lively a sense as I could of the greatness of his crimes, and how stupid and foolish his way of life had been; and to induce him to take the same course the prodigal had done in the parable, a course on which all his safety and hope depended; and that was, "to arise and go to his Father," and (in the prodigal's language) to say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

The Father in the parable, I observed to him, is the God of heaven, whom you have offended, and from whom you have departed; and your desertion

of him has brought you into these wretched circumstances. You have no help but in him whom you have forsaken. Arise then, and go to him in the prodigal's temper of mind, and prostrate yourself before him with his words; and from this passage of Scripture (which is indeed the whole Gospel represented in a parabolical way) you have a warrant to expect your reception will be like what the prodigal's was. I represented this in the strong terms of that passage of Scripture, which I plainly saw melted down his heart.

I then opened to him (as amply as the time would give me leave) the design of our Saviour's coming into the world; the greatness of his love to sinners; the nature of the covenant of grace founded in his blood; and the necessity of believing in him, as the foundation of his hopes towards God. But I had the less need to insist on these great topics with him, as he talked of them in sentiments and language surprising in one whose thoughts had long been strangers to these important subjects: and it must be owned, that he was really a man of good natural sense, and had a very graceful elocution.

When I represented to him in the very words of Scripture the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ, the promises and encouragements given to repenting and returning sinners, the instance of St. Paul, who after persecution and blasphemy obtained mercy, and obtained it that in him Jesus Christ might shew a pattern of long-suffering, and many other things that offered to my mind in that conversation, I could see by his gestures and countenance that his heart (as it were) burned within him; and after that time there was a more visible serenity and composure in his countenance. He would often say, with his eyes fixed upwards, "O God, thou knowest

“ the contrition of my heart : I hate and loath my
 “ sins, and I will not despair of thy mercy. I cast
 “ myself on thy mercy, O God, through the merits
 “ and intercession of my blessed Redeemer, and in
 “ thee I will trust.”

He said, the going to a masquerade was the beginning of his sorrows ; that he went to three : was at first a little successful in gaming, and hoped by his success to have gained enough to have bought him a commission in the army ; but that he soon lost his all ; and having pawned and sold all he had, he, by the persuasion of Plunket, took to the highway, and with him committed many robberies ; and that he was the only accomplice he ever had.

When I attended him the day after the death-warrant came down, I found no additional dejection or sadness in his mind or countenance, but rather a more visible composure. He said he was resigned to his lot ; and should even rejoice if his death might be an useful warning to others.

He told me, he saw in me a tender concern for his soul, and would be guided by my advice in every thing relating to it : and therefore asked me, whether I would advise him to receive the sacrament the morning of his execution.

I answered, that I had not the least objection to it ; that it was a rite of our Lord's own appointment for a memorial of his body broken, and his blood shed for the remission of sins ; and that as it was to be done often, it might be done also acceptably and useful then ; but I suggested, that his education had been such, that I had no need to warn him against considering it as a charm or passport, which I was afraid many poor ignorant creatures did.

He told me, that he went, as he had an opportunity, among the other prisoners who were ordered for execution, to instruct and pray with them, and prepare them for death. He related to

me several instances of the hardness of some of them, which shocked me to hear; and I verily believe he was as much shocked at them as myself; and pitied their souls, which were going into eternity in such a hardened condition.

I improved all these things as grounds on which I thought he might build hopes of his sincerity; for that to love and rejoice in any goodness he saw in others, was a sign of some goodness in his own heart; and that to have a concern for the salvation of other men's souls might be considered, especially under his circumstances, as an evidence that he had a real concern for his own.

On my saying to him, the day before his execution, that God delighted in them who fear him, and in them who hope in his mercy; and that hope in the mercy of God was as truly honouring that perfection of his nature, as fearing him was doing honour to his majesty, justice, and holiness; he said, I don't despair. I do hope in the mercy of God; and will do so to my last breath.

I asked him whether he had any family. He said, Yes! His wife was dead, with whom he had lived happily, but that he had a girl of five years old; and added, in a very pathetic tone of voice, lifting up his hands, "O my dear innocent babe! I have brought infamy and shame upon thee." I then observed, that he had reason to be very humble before God for his crimes in that view, as bringing distress on his worthy relations, his brother, child, and mother-in-law: and I further observed to him, that vice was like the plague, by which a man not only dies himself, but scatters death all around him.

He told me, what is very remarkable, that he was naturally a man of great courage; but that, after he had began to rob on the highway, guilt had made an arrant coward of him; for he was terrified at the least alarm, and so intimidated by any appearance of danger, that he always put his

accomplice (Plunket) on any hazardous attempt, not daring to engage in it himself.

I proposed to some of his friends, who were present, that they should unite with me in offering up a solemn prayer to God for him ; in which they all most willingly joined, the poor prisoner devoutly kneeling, and all of us standing around him. There, after expressing our thankfulness to God for that deep contrition and good hope he had graciously given him, I commended his soul to the mercy of God, praying that Christ Jesus, who came to seek and save lost and undone sinners, would receive his departing spirit. I hope our prayers were heard. There was not a dry eye among us ; and truly he who could be unaffected at such a scene must be hard indeed.

In the evening, for the last time, as he earnestly begged to see me, I went to him with one of his friends, and, after some conversation suitable to his unhappy situation, I once more in prayer recommended his soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The time was now come when we must take our last farewell of him. He said " this was the bitterness of death." He eagerly embraced us both ; dropped suddenly down on his knees, and in accents, the sound of which will never be out of my ears, he prayed to God to bless us both for ever ; to prosper us and our families in all our undertakings ; and eternally to reward us for all the compassion and love we had shewn to such a poor unworthy creature as he said he was.

I am informed he spent the whole night in prayer and devotion. At getting into the cart he said, " O my God, I have forsaken thee ; but yet " I will trust in thee." All the accounts I received of his behaviour in his passage to the place of execution, and at it, concur in testifying, that he went

through the whole awful scene with a manly firmness, joined with all the appearances of true devotion. I would charitably hope he has found that mercy with God, which he so earnestly sought through a Redeemer. But what to think concerning him is left to every one's own reflections.

So far Dr. Allen's narrative. It was reported by a gentleman who saw him executed, that just before the cart, in which he stood, was drawn from under him, as it was a very fine day, and the sun shone bright, he looked all around him with great composure, and then said, "Must I never more behold this beauteous sun? Do thou then, O Sun of righteousness*, shine on my departing soul."

This unhappy man shewed great signs of penitence; but none can presume to form a judgment of his salvation; or whether his repentance was genuine, or not. That must be left to the great day, when the secrets of all men's hearts shall be revealed. Archbishop Tillotson has observed†, that "it is difficult for any man to be assured of the truth and reality of his repentance, when there is no sufficient opportunity to make a trial of the sincerity of it."

There is, I think, no doubt of the sincerity of this condemned malefactor at the time Dr. Allen attended: but the question is, What would his temper and conduct have been had his life been spared for a number of years? He might have been a true penitent, and (through the merits of Christ) have been accepted as such: but, as he did not live to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," (which the Gospel requires,) it is beyond the knowledge of man to determine his future state.

* He alluded to these words, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings." Mal. iv. 2.

† See the latter end of the Archbishop's Sermon on Heb. iii, 13.

✪ Every minister who attends a condemned malefactor would do well to exhort him to make not only a general confession of sins, but particularly of that for which he has been condemned; and should endeavour to convince him, that no worldly considerations ought to hinder him from discovering any combinations in wickedness, or any evil practices designed against others, that by his intelligence such mischievous attempts might as much as possible be prevented. He should be instructed likewise what satisfaction (so far as in his power) he ought to make to those whom he may have offended or injured.

SECTION IX.

HELPS FOR CONVERSATION WITH ONE LATELY RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS.

Helps for conversing with one on a recovery from sickness, as owing to, the providence of God.

YOU cannot but be sensible, that all the various events of this lower world are under the direction and control of God.

There is nothing certain here below; and consequently you must live in a daily dependence on the providence of God, and be prepared for every event.

By him your body was made and preserved; the disorders of it likewise are to be ascribed to him: sometimes they are the immediate operation of his hand, and for wise purposes. Sometimes (and more generally) we bring diseases on ourselves by folly, sloth, intemperance, or other vices. These however are to be traced up to an overruling Providence, as they are the consequences of that ne-

nessary connection which God has established between vice and misery. But from whatever causes diseases proceed, when they are removed, it is the Lord's doing.

The hand of God is to be acknowledged in directing you to proper means*, and blessing these means.

To be the only infallible physician is what God claims as his prerogative, who superintends all means; and works with or without them, as seemeth good in his sight†.

The wisest and best of men have ascribed such events to God.

This shews the reasonableness of St. James's advice, "Is any afflicted, let him pray." If we pray daily and earnestly to God, and carefully observe the wise disposals of his providence, we shall find a great support under the afflictions of life; and shall rejoice with trembling in our greatest prosperity.

Helps for conversing with one on a recovery from sickness, as owing to the mercy of God.

The recovery of good men here is a mercy to them; and the recovery of the wicked (as they would have no well-grounded hope of happiness hereafter) is undoubtedly the same.

This recovery gives good men an opportunity of making further improvements in holiness; and the remembrance of such a mercy received ought to excite them to it.

It should dispose you to gratitude and praise, and create in you (as it has a tendency to do) the love of prayer, so as to abound in the exercises of it; and to make you more diligent, constant, and serious in your attendance on public ordinances.

* See Eccclus. xxxviii. 4.

† Deut. xxxii. 39.

You have time to perform further services for God; and it may reasonably be supposed, that you will be animated to it, shaking off your former sloth. You have further opportunities of serving your generation, especially your family; and perhaps of providing comfortably for their present subsistence, and future establishment. You are spared, that you might do more to support religion, and advance the cause of Christ in your family and neighbourhood.

You are made, I hope, by this recovery more humble, tender, and compassionate to others.

The remembrance of pain and sickness should induce you to pity the infirmities and relieve the necessities of the poor.

You should be quickened to every good word and work, by considering the uncertainties of life and health.

From these uncertainties likewise you have mementos to be always prepared for the attack of that sickness and death, from which there will be no deliverance. Thus your growing fitness for heaven may be promoted.

These are the ends which God has in afflicting and recovering his servants. You who are recovered should be sensible of the divine goodness; acknowledge, adore, and rightly improve it; especially you should let the mercy of God in recovering you from sickness be improved in the manner I have just mentioned, by greater zeal and activity in his service, and by more resolute, cheerful, unwearied attempts to do good to others.

God has by this mercy strengthened his title to your renewed life, and rendered it on many accounts more than ever his own: to him therefore let it be devoted.

Humble caution, watchfulness, and prayer are highly necessary to make a proper improvement of God's goodness in sparing and preserving you;

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and if this be your disposition, the sickness, which, through divine mercy, has not been unto death, will be to the glory of God.

Helps for a short conversation with one just recovered from sickness.

You are now recovered from your late alarming sickness; some serious conversation with you may therefore be necessary. The best advice I can give you is to remind yourself of the treachery of your heart; how prone men are to forget their promises and resolutions made in time of sickness, and the near views of death. Remind yourself farther how soon you may be in the same circumstances again; how certain death is, and how awful the consequences of it! Urge on yourself constant watchfulness and prayer, and the faithful discharge of those duties which you may have neglected, especially an attendance on the Lord's supper.

I would moreover recommend to you an attentive consideration of what Dr. Gibson (late Bishop of London) has said in his *Serious Advice* to persons who have been sick: which little tract is given by the governors of most of the infirmaries to the patients on their recovery.

Helps for a fuller conversation with the same.

You are now recovered, through the mercy of God, from a dangerous distemper. You had "received within yourself the sentence of death," but God has raised you as from the dead, and caused the light of life again to shine upon you, and brought you, as it were, anew into the land of the living. What now becomes you to do on such an occasion? You should most thankfully acknowledge this at the throne of grace, and endeavour to affect your mind with a clear and lively sense of the concern which God has in the affairs of your sickness or health, or your life or death, and that

distempers come upon you or leave you only by his permission and command: he checks their power, and says, *Hitherto*—and no further. You see, therefore, nothing comes by chance, but by the all-wise permission and power of God alone.

Now an all-wise and good God would never have sent this affliction on you, had it not been for some gracious and kind design, intending your good. "He never afflicts willingly," but when it is needful. And when the blessed Father of our spirits lays any correction on us, it is not "for his own pleasure," but only for our profit, that we may be made partakers of his holiness." Ask yourself what might probably be the wise and kind design of God's providence in your late visitation by sickness.

1. Was it for the trial of your virtues, to prove your faith in God, your hope in Christ, your patience, and Christian fortitude, your deadness to the present world, and your victory over death? Was it to give you an opportunity of exercising and shewing forth these worthy dispositions, and this right temper of soul, by which God is glorified, and your Christian profession honoured? If this were the design of heaven, how is it answered in you? How did you behave? meek and resigned, or fretful and impatient? Did you cling to this present world, or did this sickness find you in some measure dead to the things of this mortal state? and were you willing to quit this present world, that, being "absent from these things, you might be present with the Lord?"

2. This sickness perhaps was sent to awaken you from some dangerous and sinful security into which you had fallen; to rouse you to a due concern about the state of your soul; to make you turn your eyes inward, and seriously to enquire on what terms you stand with regard to God, to Christ, and the future world?

3. Was it sent as a chastisement for some sin?

or to admonish and correct you for some particular misconduct with which you stand chargeable before heaven ?

Another thing which is necessary for you to do is carefully to call to mind, and always endeavour to persevere in the same serious and right sense of things which you had on your sick bed.

In what light did you then see the grandeur and riches of this world, which are wont so deeply to engross men's attention and zeal, and which perhaps in time past too much dazzled your weak eyes, and captivated your foolish heart ? What vain and empty things did they all then appear ! You then clearly saw the wisdom of religion, the inestimable value of piety and virtue ; of a life spent in the fear of God ; of a conscience bearing witness to your sincerity, and purged by faith in the blood of Christ from all guilt.

Having been thus graciously redeemed from the power of the grave, (perhaps from the horrors of eternal darkness and death,) it now also behoves you, with the deepest and most grateful resignation, to ask yourself, " What shall I render to my " almighty Deliverer ?" This great favour on God's part surely demands some answerable return on yours. What tribute can you render on this occasion, which he will be pleased to accept ? You should make your most thankful acknowledgments for his mercy ; and principally,

1. By rendering your most hearty praises and thanksgivings to God ; acknowledging this great blessing to have come to you from his hand ; and by adoring Christ Jesus, the kind Intercessor, who looked upon you from heaven with a pitying eye ; who pleaded your cause before the eternal throne ; and procured for you a reprieve from the sentence of death. " Your soul therefore should magnify " the Lord, and your spirit rejoice in God your " Saviour."

2. By giving on this occasion (according to your ability) some extraordinary alms to the poor. Your alms, like those of Cornelius, should come up together with your praises before God. You cannot expect that any sacrifice of your lips, any praises or acknowledgments which you make with your tongue, will be regarded by God, if not accompanied with a sincere compassion to your brethren in distress. Your goodness, or benevolence, cannot extend to him; but it may to his children and servants on earth; many of whom you see under great sufferings, and in want. Now these he has appointed to be his deputies, (or representatives,) to receive your thank-offering and benevolence in his stead; and Christ has expressly assured us, that whatever kindness we shew to them, he will accept as if done to himself.

3. By a surrender of yourself to God. You will now I hope make an humble and unfeigned surrender of your body and soul into his hands; and lay yourself under the most inviolable and sacred obligations to be henceforwards the Lord's. To his mercy you owe it, that you are not now numbered among the dead. The life therefore which he has so graciously redeemed from destruction, you will in the most solemn manner possible (especially at the sacramental table) consecrate and devote to his service and fear. You are under infinite obligations to live unto God: you cannot but acknowledge, that you are not your own: you are most truly and justly Christ's, bought with his blood, and redeemed by his intercession from the deserved sentence of death.

Though of yourself you cannot maintain these religious resolutions, but would soon fall before temptations, if left to your own strength; yet, through Christ strengthening you, you can do all things. It is of infinite concern to you then that you offer up your constant and earnest prayers to

heaven. If you continue instant in this duty, and ask help from God, he has assured you that you shall receive it: but if you fall into a neglect, or disuse of daily prayer, you shall certainly soon fall by renewed temptations, turn back into a worldly and sensual course of life, and forget the solemn vows and purposes you have lately made.

Remember, that, though you are now raised from a sick bed, you must very soon lie down upon it again; lie down to rise no more till the resurrection of the dead.

Helps for conversing with the relations of one who has been lately recovered from sickness.

1. As it has pleased God to recover your sick and dying relation, [be it husband or wife, brother or sister,] it is a great mercy to you; and by this he has honoured your earnest intercession for him, [or her.]

2. It is a mercy to you, as by this you may reap further pleasure and benefit by your desirable intercourses with him, and by his friendly offices for you.

3. When such an one is restored to us, we are "to receive him with all gladness in the Lord." (Phil. ii. 29.) that is, temper our joy with devotion, and receive him as the gift of God.

4. Should you find that he is improved by this visitation of sickness in his Christian course, it would sweeten the mercy, and increase your gratitude.

5. You should frequently recollect such an interposition of Providence with thankfulness.

6. Such a recollection of his goodness may promote your own spiritual health and welfare.

7. You may frequently and usefully reflect, that if it be such a mercy to be recovered from sickness and death, what a mercy it is to be recovered from sin and everlasting condemnation; to have our

transgressions pardoned, and the vices of the mind healed by the influential and sanctifying grace of God; to be interested in Christ Jesus; restored to a new and a divine life; and disposed to the faithful service of God. How thankful should they be, who are recovered from ignorance and vice; "whose souls prosper and are in health;" who are healed by Christ's stripes, and restored to the joy of his salvation. How thankful should they be, whose dearest relations, in the bonds of nature and friendship, are recovered from the paths of sin, have had their backslidings healed, and are "walking in the truth." This, as the greatest blessing of all, we should desire for ourselves and for others, (especially those for whom we are sincerely concerned,) that above all our souls may be healthy and flourishing; that we may die to sin, and live to righteousness: and if this be the situation of our minds, we may well say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." (Ps. cxxvi. 3.) Is it not our duty then to shew our gratitude for our near escapes from temporal, and more especially from eternal death, by serving the Lord "without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives?" (Luke i. 75.) Then we shall be preparing for that happy state, and at length received into it, where God (Rev. xxi. 4.) "shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

A Thanksgiving after recovery from sickness, being a Paraphrase of the hundred and sixteenth Psalm.

1. *I prayed earnestly in my late dangerous sickness, and I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard the voice of my prayer.*

2. *I could scarcely speak I was so faint, but am very thankful that he hath inclined his ear unto*

me, heard my inward and secret groans, and delivered me as I desired, therefore will I learn by this act of his goodness to call upon him as long as I live.

3. *I see that is the way to get relief, for the snares of death, like a net, compassed me round about, so that there seemed no way open to escape, and the pains, the most terrible agonies, like those of hell, violently gat hold upon me.*

4. *And when I found this outward trouble of body and inward heaviness of mind seize on me, and I called upon the name of the Lord, I prayed, saying, O Lord, I beseech thee, free me from my bodily pain, if thou seest fit, and, however that may be, deliver my soul; not only spare my life, but deliver me from sin, and from eternal pains, whatever I endure here.*

5. *And he was pleased to hear me, an unworthy sinner, therefore I here openly declare, gracious is the Lord, and unwilling to afflict us, if our sins do not provoke him to it, and righteous, yea, our God is merciful, exceedingly merciful. He was righteous in laying this punishment upon me, and merciful in supporting me under it, and at length in removing it from me.*

6. *I myself am a witness and an instance that the Lord preserveth the simple, the meanest of his servants: for, I was in misery, who had no worth in me to deserve his favour, and yet he helped me.*

7. *Wherefore despair no more: turn again then out of the path of despair unto thy former rest and satisfaction, in God's mercy through Christ, O my soul, for the Lord hath rewarded thee well for trusting in him, having done thee good, and delivered thee, who neither didst deserve, nor canst requite this favour.*

8. *And why should I ever distrust thee again? Thou hast delivered my soul from eternal and my body from temporal death; and, by removing my*

fears and my pains, hast freed mine eyes from tears, those which my anguish and fear extorted from me, and kept my feet from falling into the pit of despair, or the snares of the devil, restoring to me both my life and my hope.

9. *And since he has given me a new life, I will spend it holily, and always walk, as it were, before the Lord, who sees all my ways, and knows all my actions, and in this course will I persist while I am in the land of the living, among whom by his mercy I now am, who was lately more likely to be numbered among the dead.*

10. *I believe always, that he was able to help me, and therefore will I speak of his praise, declare his power, and own myself his servant; but I was sore troubled in my extremity, for fear he should not be willing to deliver me: and when all about me gave me hopes, I spoke rashly, and I said in my haste, being impatient of longer sufferings, that all men, even those that assured me God would help me, are liars, and do but deceive me, as I feared they had done: so low was then my faith.*

11. *But now he has exceeded my hopes, and fully confuted my unbelief, what reward shall I give unto the Lord for my ease, life, health, and for all the benefits that he hath done unto me, and the comforts to which he hath restored me?*

12. *I cannot requite him, but I would do what I can. As the Jews had their cup of thanksgiving upon all great deliverances, so I will on the first opportunity go to the sacramental table, and receive the cup of salvation, a salvation purchased by the blood of Christ. And not only at the Sacrament, but on all other occasions, will I call on the name of the Lord for help, having found such benefits by my prayers in this my late extremity, and I will beseech him for Christ's sake to continue his mercies to me, and grant me his further assistance.*

13. *Moreover, since I owe my life to his mercy,*

and resolved, if he spared it, to devote it to his service, I will (by my praises, prayers, and endeavours after holiness) pay my vows made in my danger and distress now, and am come hither in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem, to bless his name, and to cause others to join with me. Wherefore let us, O let us all, praise the Lord.

SECTION X.

HELPS FOR DISCHARGING THE IMPORTANT DUTY OF PRAYER PROPERLY.

Helps in regard to the manner of praying with the sick.

1. **PRAYERS** with the sick should not be too long. Whenever you pray with one who is an eminent Christian, you may occasionally add a petition for the revival of religion in this degenerate age; as you may be assured he will heartily join with you in it; for good men have always a zeal for the increase of religion.

2. When the sick person seems to be in an un-renewed state, earnestly pray that God would have mercy on him; and give him a little more time, that he may repent; and that the dreadful sentence of condemnation may not be pronounced against him. Such petitions have a tendency to awaken more than an express exhortation. These likewise may impress others who are present. A contrary method of praying will tend to harden any bystander, who, like him, may be un-renewed. Take care how you call such as these the servants of God. Our brother (or sister) is much more proper to be used in praying with such sort of people.

3. When you pray with a dying real Christian, you should use some petitions expressive of his

faith, and of his disposition towards God for his benefits. As for instance, you should praise God for the renewing grace vouchsafed to him; for his communion with God in ordinances; and that God has enabled him to persevere to the end, and to adorn religion. Praise God likewise for the comforts he has received during his confinement by sickness: for the serenity and peace with which he is looking into the eternal world; for the hope, that, though he dies to us, he lives to God; and that we shall meet again in heaven. These are suitable petitions and thanksgivings, which the sick person may present for himself, as well as any other, who prays at his bedside in his behalf.

4. It may not be improper to add a petition for those of the family, who join with you in prayer, that they may be prepared for the will of God, if he should make a breach in the family by the death of the sick person; that this visitation may be sanctified; and that those around him may be awakened by it to consider and prepare for their own latter end.

But the use of all prayers for the sick must be discretionary, and left to the judgment of the minister, or some Christian friend, in the application of them. Different forms will in this, as well as in all other cases, more or less suit the mind and circumstances of different persons; and when once experience has taught any one which sort seems most to affect the sufferers whom he attends, and whom he desires to assist and improve, he will then need no other or better direction what prayers to use.

Helps to prevent the using the words of prayer without any influence on the heart.

The motives of prayer should be well considered; it is highly derogatory to the honour of God, and injurious to yourself, whenever you pray

to him in a formal manner with your lips only, using words without any meaning. You should pray from an heart-felt conviction, that you are a miserable sinner; that the time is short; that death draws near; that judgment is at hand; that eternity is before you; that there is no salvation but in God's mercy through Christ. If you thus pray, you will hereafter be a partaker of that faith, which overcometh the world. (1 John v. 4.)

“The generality are too ready to take up with the mere performance of prayer. When they pray for spiritual mercies, they do not consider afterwards whether God has granted them or not. They have asked at the time for an increase of faith, wisdom, holiness, and other graces; and then have soon forgotten for what they asked, or neglected to observe how far these petitions have been answered. When they have requested temporal blessings, how little have they considered the hand of God in granting, or the wisdom of God in refusing them! Hence all the lowness of their attainments in divine things! Hence their subjection to earthly things*!”

Great indeed are the patience and love of God; yet it cannot be supposed that such petitioners will be regarded. Never let us so far delude our own souls, as to believe, that those prayers will be effectual with God which are not useful to ourselves.

Helps for self-examination on some of the petitions in our daily or occasional prayers.

It may be very useful to many, if some of the petitions in their prayers were turned into ques-

* See Serle's *Christian Remembrancer*, or short Reflections on the Faith, Life, and Conduct of a real Christian, page 133, of the second edition.

tions ; as they would then see how far they had desired to have their petitions fulfilled. As for instance ; I have prayed for the promised assistance of God's Holy Spirit : am I convinced of my want of it, and do I sincerely desire it ? I have presented this prayer through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ : am I duly sensible, that I am not worthy so much as to ask pardon for my sins, or to present any petition to God, but through the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ ? By such and the like self-examination in all our prayers, and from the answers faithfully returned by our own hearts to such questions as these, we shall be able to form a right judgment of the state of our souls.

A method of self-examination, with the due order of asking each question here stated, so as to prevent either confusion, omission, or irregularity in the discharge of this very important duty.

This manner of self-examination may be used at any time, either daily or weekly, morning and evening, or whenever it shall be judged necessary, as it frequently will in the day of sickness or other affliction.

1. The first question I wish to be asked is, Do you confess your sins of omission, as well as of commission ?

2. Do you repent of them ?

3. Do you pray for mercy and forgiveness ?

4. Do you plead the promises and atonement of Christ ?

5. Do you resolve to reverence, love, and obey God ?

6. Do you implore the aid of the Holy Spirit to strengthen your resolutions ?

7. Do you examine how far these things are done or left undone ?

8. Are you deeply humbled on any deficiencies ?

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9. Do you watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation?

10. Are you a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises? Heb. vi.

12. Do you acquaint yourself with God, and are you at peace? Job xxii. 21.

Helps to assist the sick (or others) in praying to God acceptably.

1. You should be very careful not to trifle in the presence of the eternal God; for what does not proceed from the heart is no prayer, but rather a sin. See Psalm cix. 7.

2. If you pray without some fixedness of thought and sincerity of heart, it is, in effect, taking God's name in vain. You should consider well each petition, as you offer it up; and, if you have not been sufficiently attentive to it, repeat it again and again till your heart accompanies the words.

3. Make some pauses. Think what you are about. Ask yourself, Is this prayer? Is this a rational spiritual service? Will God be pleased with this kind of worship? The formal and customary kneeling, the lifting up the hands and eyes to heaven without the heart, the cold and careless uttering of words, are in reality no more than the dead carcase of prayer, and not a living sacrifice.

4. Fix your dependence on the Spirit of God to help your infirmities, which God has promised to give to those who ask it. (Luke xi. 13.) And you should in every act of devotion earnestly entreat God's presence and assistance, or by a short ejaculation previous to it.

5. It is of the utmost importance, that in all your prayers you should maintain a believing regard to our Lord and Advocate Jesus Christ, and never lose sight of him. All blessings in time and eternity are the purchase of his blood, and to be ob-

tained by his intercession. No prayers can be acceptable without faith in his promises; and they must be presented to God through him, as your Mediator; and through him you are to expect mercy. It is essentially necessary, that at the conclusion of every prayer (as you may see it is in our Liturgy) the name of Christ should be expressly mentioned, and the dependence of the soul should certainly be fixed on his merits and intercession.

6. When your prayer is ended, you should recollect how it was performed, that you may be humbled, or satisfied, and thankful, as the case shall require. God may sometimes, for a farther trial of your faith, and other wise reasons, delay to return an answer to your prayer, though presented in sincerity, faith, and hope: David waited patiently, and at length the Lord heard him. See Psalm xl. 1. Sometimes you may not pray earnestly enough; or be sufficiently sensible of the request you make, so as to be very desirous of obtaining it. At other times you may pray for outward and temporal mercies too importunately and unwarrantably. Sometimes the mercy you pray for may not be good for you; or probably may not be yet good for you*: you are not therefore to judge of God's hearing prayer by your not having any immediate answer.

7. You should live suitably to your prayers; and let every one see that you are the better for them. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, (says the Psalmist,) the Lord will not hear me." (Psalm lxvi. 18.) "He that turneth away his ear from

* God is alike both good and wise,
In what he grants and what denies.
Perhaps what goodness gives to-day,
To-morrow goodness takes away.
Cotton's Visions.

“hearing the law, says Solomon, even his prayer shall be an abomination.” (Prov. xxviii. 9.)

8. You will deceive yourself if you imagine that any thing but an increase of holiness will effectually prove, that you have been with God in daily prayer.

9. You should consider, that one great use of prayer is to produce in you a disposition to receive God's grace; to exercise your dependence on God through a Redeemer; to increase your desires after the things for which you ask; and to make you sensible of your wants, that you may never cease praying for relief till you have obtained it. Alas! for them, who have no hope in God; no access to a throne of grace; no sure promise, on which to rest in time of trouble.

10. Remember, that, when once the means of religion are discarded, the principles of it will be of no longer continuance; and that, when once you cease to attend the worship of God, you will soon also cease to fear and obey him.

The helps I have here suggested will, I hope, contribute to the pleasure of your devotion, and make it the instrument of your growth in grace, and fitness for heaven.

Bishop Wilkins's sentiments on prayer.

The great and good Bishop Wilkins has observed in his treatise, entitled *The Gift of Prayer*, that “prayer by book floats for the most part too much in generalities, and is not particular enough for each several occasion.” Many however have not acquired the habit of praying without a form of prayer: they therefore may occasionally add, in any of the forms they may use, a few sentences peculiarly suitable to their own circumstances, or those of the sick person whom they may visit. I well know plausible objections have been made to

forms of prayer : but this I will venture to assert, (though I admit the justness of the Bishop's remark,) that it is better to pray by a form than not to pray at all ; and that, if it were not for forms of prayer, many persons would not pray at all. They pray indeed in the words of others, yet they make them their own, by thoroughly understanding and conscientiously using them, as expressing their own wants ; and when such forms do not express their wants so particularly and fully as they could wish, it is much easier for them to add a few sentences, expressive of these wants, than to frame whole prayers : though even this may be done in time, after they have been accustomed to add some occasional sentences.

I shall conclude the whole of this tenth section with some important resolutions : but I would previously observe, that if a principle of faith in Christ, productive of love to God and delight in all his will, be wanting in any man, such a man's prayers and religion, till this be added, are vain. Were we to look on a corpse, which was not torn in pieces, nor any ways disfigured, and to say, Here is the entire body of a man : here are hands, feet, eyes, ears, and lips ! what can be wanting ? It may be answered, The soul is wanting, which should give life to all ; and for want of which even these members, complete as they may seem, will soon moulder into dust. Depend on it, religion is never sincere till it becomes a pleasure. To endeavour to compound for as little of it as possible, is a sure proof of an insincere heart. He who thinks himself a Christian, and yet is afraid of going too far in religion, is a stranger to the first principles of it. There may indeed, and there ought to be a caution against the extremes of enthusiasm and of superstition ; but these are not religion ; and I must repeat it again, that for any one to guard against the most eminent heights and attainments

in the Christian religion, as what he would gladly omit and avoid, is a sad sign of an insincere heart.

RESOLUTIONS.

A conscientious attention to the practical use of these resolutions, and to a dependence on divine assistance, will certainly be productive of beneficial effects, and shew the power and grace of Christ to support and comfort his faithful followers.

1. I am resolved by the grace of God never to neglect morning and evening prayer, either in secret, or in my family; and to be immediately and deeply humbled in the presence of God for any tendency towards such a neglect, and still more should I ever be guilty of so heinous, so ungrateful an omission.

2. I am resolved by the grace of God (whether in sickness or in health) neither to say nor to do any thing through pride, vain-glory, or indiscretion; but to be serious and faithful, endeavouring to edify others; especially those who may be about me when I am sick.

3. I am resolved by the grace of God to search the Scriptures daily, in a devotional and practical view; and when any passage shall occur suitable to the state of my own mind, I will endeavour to turn it into prayer while reading it. If any text impresses me as pregnant with instruction for a night text, I will treasure it up in my memory for further consideration.

4. I am resolved by the grace of God to habituate myself to frequent ejaculations, and to keep up in my heart (especially in the times of sickness) a comfortable communion with God, as much as in me lies, and a steady reliance on the promises of the great Redeemer.

PRAYERS,

SUITABLE TO SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES* OF THE
SICK, AND OTHERS.

An introductory (or preparatory) prayer, which may be used occasionally before any other.

☞ This prayer, which is designed for general use, may occasionally be used by or with a sick person ; and will, it is to be hoped, excite seriousness, and keep up an holy watchfulness, lest prayer (that important duty) should be rendered a mere form of no real use. Such an introductory prayer may probably be the means of preventing us from shamefully contradicting in our tempers through the day the prayers we offer up in the morning, either secretly, or in our families. Such an inconsistency has, I fear, greatly contributed to the banishment of family worship from many families, as if it were a practice which produced no beneficial effects, or were not a duty incumbent on every family.

I WHO am dust, and to the dust must soon return, adore thee, O Lord God Almighty ; for thou deservest all possible adoration. May an awful sense of thy majesty and my meanness, of thy holiness and my guilt, restrain me from “ drawing nigh to thee with my lips, whilst my heart is far from thee.” Isai. xxix. 13. Enable me to lift it up to thee with sincerity, reverence, humility, faith,

* N. B. Many of the following prayers are suited to the circumstances of the persons mentioned in the foregoing sections. As for instance, there is a prayer with one in a bad, in a doubtful, and in a good state ; also with a formalist, &c. and such of these prayers as are intended to be used in the presence of the sick, may by a little alteration (as by changing the first person into the third, and *he*, *him*, and *his*, into *she* and *her*) be used by the sick themselves : and those which are intended to be used by the sick themselves, may easily be so altered, as to be proper for a minister, or any other person, to use when he prays with them.

and hope. May my worship be acceptable to thee, my God, comfortable to myself, render me patient under every trial, exemplary to all about me, and fitter for thy kingdom of glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A concluding prayer, which may be used occasionally after any other.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to answer the petitions I have now presented, in the time and manner as may best promote thy glory and my own final good. Pardon the imperfection of my devotions, and help mine infirmities. Keep me through the remainder of my uncertain life in thy faith, fear, and love; and in every day may the first and last of my thoughts be of thee my God. I commit myself this day [or night] to thy protection and blessing. May I ever retain a grateful sense of the privilege of making my requests known unto thee (unworthy as I am) through the mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son and our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for the blessing of God on the endeavours of a minister or others to assist the sick, which may be used just before such an intended visit.

MAKE me, O Lord, ever ready to do to others whatsoever, in like circumstances, I should wish them to do to me; particularly to visit me in my sickness, and assist me under it by their spiritual advice. May I now be enabled so to speak to him, with whom I am going to converse, as to excite in him "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Give me a considerate mind to weigh what is fit to be said, and make me wise and serious, pious and charitable in what I speak, that it may be edifying, and give no just cause of offence. How shall I so apply myself, as to be useful to him? Lord, direct me! Assist, and bless me in the means and endeavours I shall use

to attain this desirable end. Open thou, O Lord, his eyes, soften his heart, strengthen his weakness, restore him to health, and give him growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer for God's acceptance of the prayers which may be offered up for the sick by a minister, or others.

From Dr. Dodwell.

O LORD, we address thee, in pursuance of thine own gracious permission and command, in behalf of this our afflicted brother. We are truly sensible of our unworthiness to ask any thing for ourselves, and presume to no merit in recommending a sinner, like ourselves, to thy mercy. But thy direction is, that "we should pray for the sick "members of thy church," (James v. 14.) and "mourn with them that mourn." (Rom. xii. 15.) In discharge therefore of our duty to thee, in a just compassion to his sufferings, and under a sense of our own perilous and uncertain state of life, we implore thy mercy and relief for this suffering partaker of our nature, and our religion. We desire to pray for him, and for ourselves; for whether in sickness or in health, we all stand in need of thy protection and grace. Continue us in a sound state of mind and body, or restore us to it; and may it be our constant and sincere desire to serve thee with all our faculties. Confirm us in the Christian faith, and Christian practice. Pardon our sins, that we may become acceptable petitioners to thee. Hear and accept the petitions, which we now offer in his favour, for the sake, and through the merits, of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A morning prayer, which may be used by the sick, or others.

Confession of sin, and } **O** LORD, my God and
petition for pardon. } Father, I come before thy
 presence this morning to adore thy majesty; to

confess with the deepest humility my sins of omission and commission, which have been innumerable; and to implore the pardon of them in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving.] I thank thee for every blessing which through him I enjoy; particularly for bringing me in safety to the beginning of this day. I thank thee that I am disposed (as I humbly hope I am) to employ the same in thy service; and to have a single eye to thy glory in all my thoughts, words, and actions.

For assistance.] For this end vouchsafe me the aid of thy Holy Spirit, that by his saving light the darkness of my mind may be dispersed, "my inner man renewed day by day," my evil passions subdued, and that in all things I may live not unto myself*, but unto thee. Increase my faith; confirm my hope; excite my love; and impress on my mind a zeal to promote thy cause in the world.

For God's blessing and protection.] Bless me in all my lawful undertakings; and grant, that amidst all my concerns in this present life, I may never lose sight of that which is to come. Be thou the Protector of my body, and the Guide of my soul. Strengthen me against all temptations of the world, and "the wiles of the Devil," and defend me from every kind of danger. "Put on me thy whole armour, and make me more than conqueror, through him who hath loved me, and given himself for me."

Intercession.] Have compassion on all who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity; and succour them according to their various wants. Shed the graces of thy Spirit on me, my relations, friends, and all my fellow-creatures; particularly on the fatherless, the widows, and those

* See Rom. xiv. 8.

who have remembered me in their prayers, or have desired to be remembered in mine. Enable me and them to be "faithful unto death," and then bestow on us that crown of life, which is promised to all true believers by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In whose endearing name and comprehensive words I further pray to thee in behalf of myself and all my fellow-creatures.

THE LORD'S PRAYER,

Which may be used occasionally, either with or without the petitions between the crotchets.

Our Father, which art in heaven,

[I bow down before thine awful presence, O Lord God Almighty; with the profoundest veneration, yet I am encouraged to approach thee with a filial confidence, as my heavenly Father; and I humbly hope, that I am (as it is my earnest desire that I may be) reconciled to thee by thy Son Jesus Christ; and that thou wilt not impute my trespasses unto me. 2 Cor. v. 19.]

Hallowed be thy name.

[Sanctified, revered, adored, and glorified by me and all mankind, in thought, word, and deed.]

Thy kingdom come;

and spread wider and wider till it be extended over the whole earth. May thy kingdom of grace be established in mine heart here, and thy kingdom of glory be my portion hereafter.]

Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven;
[particularly in me passively, and by me actively.
May I know thy will, obey and submit to it.]*

* The three first petitions in the Lord's Prayer relate to God; and the substance of them is, that he may be glorified. The three last petitions relate to ourselves; and the substance of them is, that our wants, both temporal and spiritual, may be supplied.

Give us this day our daily bread.

[Make me truly thankful for it, and mindful of the wants and sufferings of others.]

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

[Enable me, O Lord, to forgive others, as thou hast made this the condition of thy forgiveness of me. O forgive the sins of my childhood, of my youth, of my riper years, the sin against*—, and the “sins which most easily beset me;” especially those of which my conscience is most afraid, and on which I shall for ever reflect with deep humiliation, and penitential sorrow.]

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[Preserve me, O Lord, from temptation, that I may not be exposed to it; or preserve me in it, that I may not be overcome by it: and deliver me from evil of every kind; especially the evil of sin and pain.]

For thine is the kingdom,

[“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” (Rev. xix. 6.) May I be a most grateful subject of his kingdom here, be daily preparing for a residence in it hereafter; and depart in a good hope through grace. (2 Thess. ii. 16.)]

And the power,

[May I trust in this power to supply all my wants, (spiritual and temporal) so far as may finally be best for me; and may I be supported by it in life and in death.]

And the glory, for ever and ever.

[The glory of creation, providence, redemption, and of all thine attributes. May it be my constant endeavour to magnify thee in all these respects and to cause others to do likewise; and do thou O Lord, bless all such endeavours!]

* As, for instance, against my parents, my children, husband, or wife, &c. which may here be named.

Amen.

[So may it be! I most sincerely and earnestly desire, that thou, O my God, mayest be glorified; and that my petitions for the welfare of myself and my fellow-creatures may be heard and accepted, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. May I therefore rise from my knees comforted, and rejoicing in hope.]

N. B. It will be very proper and beneficial to finish our devotions with these important words of the Apostle, (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) as they contain a summary of all the inestimable blessings which we have been imploring, and of all which constitutes the happiness of a Christian.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with me (and with all whom it is my duty to remember in my prayers) this day [or night] and for evermore. Amen.

☞ How reviving the consideration, that sinners may approach the throne of grace in the name of Christ, hoping for mercy! How animating the thought, that "Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:" (Heb. xiii. 8,) and that his power and grace are the same to me, as they were to my forefathers, and will be the same to my children: for, *as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.*

An evening prayer, which may be used by the sick, or others.

Thanksgiving. O LORD, our heavenly Father, I, a polluted miserable sinner, bow down before thy sovereign Majesty to bless thy holy name, and to thank thee for all thy mercies; particularly for having preserved me this day from those dangers, to which the weakness of human nature is liable; and for not having dealt with me according to my deserts.

Confession and petition for pardon.] Most merciful God, pardon, I beseech thee, for thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, all the sins which I have committed this day, or at any other time before ; and enable me to believe in him to the salvation of my soul.

For assistance.] Grant me the aid of thy Holy Spirit, that for the time to come I may not offend thee as I have done, but may walk before thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

For rest and protection.] Protect me during this night ; give me such moderate rest, as may refresh my frail and wearied body. When I lie down may I have a comfortable sense of thy peace in my conscience : enable me to commit myself, and all that I am and have, into the hands of thy gracious providence ; and may I " cast all my care upon thee, " believing that thou carest for me." (1 Pet. v. 7.)

For an easy and happy death.] Above all do thou fit and prepare me for my last great change ; and remove from me the slavish fear of it. Whenever death shall come, may I be found watching ; and may I know and rejoice that his sting is taken out by Jesus Christ ; that so I may meet him not as a king of terrors, but as a messenger of peace.

For a favourable hearing.] Hear, O Lord, hear me, and answer these my humble petitions, for thy mercy's sake, in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord ;

In whose prevailing name and expressive words I further call upon thee : Our Father, &c. See p. 167.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. See p. 163.

A Prayer to be used by one who is sick, morning and evening.

Adoration.] O LORD God Almighty, I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and all my powers of

body and mind were produced and are supported by thee. "Thou woundest, and makest whole."

Confession and petition for pardon.] I humbly own and reverence thy hand in my present affliction. I acknowledge that thou art righteous in all that befalls me; for I have sinned, and thou chastenest me less than mine iniquities deserve. In punishment thou shewest mercy, continuest to me many comforts, and givest me hope of that pardon, which I so much want, and at this time earnestly implore.

Petition for improvement of sickness.] I desire to search and try my ways, and turn unto the Lord with deep humility, sincere repentance, and a lively faith in the great Redeemer; and may the fruit of this and every affliction be, to take away sin, and make my heart better.

For the restoration of health.] I beseech thee, O Lord, to direct me to means for the removal of my disorder, and for the establishment of my health, and render those means beneficial to me; that I may be yet capable of glorifying thee in my station, and relations, and, by further services for thee on earth, be fitter for immortality.

For a right temper of mind.] Support me, gracious God, that "my soul may not be cast down, "and disquieted within me." Assist me to cherish penitent, believing, serious thoughts and affections. Grant me such resignation to thy will, such patience and meekness towards men, as my divine Master requireth, and as he himself manifested, whilst he was a sufferer on earth. May I learn from what I now feel to pity all who are sick, in pain, or otherwise afflicted, and do all in my power to assist and relieve them.

For preparation for death.] If by this affliction thou intendest to bring me down to the grave, prepare me by thy grace for my removal hence, and an entrance on the unseen, eternal state; and may

all the sufferings of the present life be the means appointed to procure me a crown of glory; which is weighty, inconceivably valuable, and eternal. See 2 Cor. iv. 17. X

For the morning.

[I bless thee, O Lord, that thou art giving me another day. Grant me such measures of ease and comfort, that I may improve it diligently by conversing with thee, and my own heart, in meditation and prayer, and be capable of enjoying the blessings, which thou art pleased still to grant me.]

For the evening.

[I thank thee, O Lord, for any degree of ease and comfort which I have this day enjoyed. Grant me this night such refreshing rest, that I may be better able to discharge the duties and bear the burdens of another day, if thou shalt be pleased to add another day to my life. If my eyes should be kept waking, may my meditations on thee (be comfortable and useful to me) & *lead me to Heaven.*

Most gracious God, and heavenly Father, have compassion on what I now endure, my great weakness and frequent pain, and hear my imperfect petitions, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who was once "a man of sorrow," and is still "touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" to whom, as our merciful High Priest, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer scripturally illustrated.

Our Father, (Isai. lxiii. 16.)

[By right of creation. Mal. ii. 10.]

By bountiful provision. Ps. cxlv. 16.]

By gracious adoption. Ephes. i. 5.]

Which art in heaven, (1 Kings viii. 43.)

[The throne of thy glory. Isai. lxvi. 1.]

The portion of thy children. 1 Peter i. 4.
The temple of thy angels. Isai. vi. 1.]

Hallowed be thy name. (Ps. cxv. 1.)
[By the thoughts of my heart. Ps. lxxxvi. 11.
By the words of my lips. Ps. li. 15.
By the work of my hands. 1 Cor. x. 31.]

Thy kingdom come ; (Ps. cx. 2.)
[Of providence to defend me. Ps. xvii. 8.
Of grace to refine me. 1 Thess. v. 23.
Of glory to crown me. Col. iii. 4.]

Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven.
(Acts xxi. 14.)
[Towards me without resistance. 1 Sam. iii. 18.
By me without compulsion. Ps. cxix. 36.
Universally without exception. Luke i. 6.
Eternally without declension. Ps. cxix. 93.]

Give us this day our daily bread ; (Matt. vi. 11.)
[The things necessary for my body. Prov. xxx. 8.
The things necessary for the eternal life of my
soul. John vi. 34.]

And forgive us our trespasses, (Ps. xxv. 11.)
[Against the commands of thy Law. 1 John iii. 4.
Against the grace of the Gospel. 1 Tim. i. 13.]

As we forgive them that trespass against us.
(Matt. vi. 15.)
[By defaming our characters. Matt. v. 11.
By embezzling our property. Philem. verse 16.
By abusing our persons. Acts vii. 60.]

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from
evil.* (Matt. xxvi. 41.)
[Of overwhelming affliction. Ps. cxxx. 1.
Of worldly enticements. 1 John ii. 15.
Of Satan's devices. 1 Tim. iii. 7.
Of seduction of errors. 1 Tim. vi. 10.
Of sinful affections. Rom. i, 26.]

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. (Jude, verse 25.)

[Thy kingdom governs all. Ps. ciii. 19.]

[Thy power subdues all. Phil. iii. 21.]

[Thy glory is above all. Ps. cxlviii. 13.]

Amen. (Ephes. i. 11.)

[As it is in thy purposes. Isai. xiv. 27.]

[So it is in thy promises. 2 Cor. i. 20.]

[So be it in our prayers. Rev. xxii. 20.]

[So it shall be to thy praise. Rev. xix. 4.]

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.
See page 169.

Various Thanksgivings, Confessions, and Petitions, independent on each other, which may be used separately, by the addition of Amen to each; or they may be used unitedly as one prayer, either for morning or evening, or both.

Thanksgiving. **I** THANK thee, O Lord, for thy protection of me the past day (or the past night); for thy preservation of me from fire, tempest, robbery, pain, sickness, or any other calamity. I thank thee, for being the hearer of prayer, and for the grace thou hast given me now to pray to thee.

I thank thee, O Lord, for my bed, for refreshing sleep, [or support under a wearisome night,] for the addition of another day, and for thy many, great, and undeserved mercies, temporal and spiritual; particularly for my recovery from several dangerous illnesses, [instances of which may be here mentioned,] and for many wonderful interpositions of Providence in my favour.

I thank thee, O Lord, for food, raiment, friends, [servants, a sufficient income, and a commodious habitation, if this should be the case,] for light, air, fire, and water, and for any opportunity or capacity of doing or receiving good.

But above all, O Lord, I thank thee for the re-

demption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and the hope of glory.

Confession.] I penitently confess and deeply lament the sins I have committed, and the duties I have omitted. I confess, that I am guilty of many heinous aggravated provocations, and have made very ungrateful returns to thee, my Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, for the daily benefits I have received at thy hands. God be merciful to me a poor sinner, who now earnestly implores thy forgiveness.

Repentance.] Give me, O Lord, that true repentance, which thou hast promised to accept through the merits and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the only remedy against the things past, which I cannot recall, and of which I am now ashamed. O that the power of sin was subdued in me, and the guilt of sin removed from me!

Pleading.] I would now, and in every time of need, be looking up to thee, my God, and plead the intercession of Christ, that I may obtain mercy as a miserable sinner, and grace to help me as a needy creature. I would plead, like David, my misery and my wants, which are great; [See Ps. xxv. 11.] and I would moreover plead thy promises of pardon to all who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the Gospel.

Self-examination.] May no day pass without examining in the evening how I have governed my thoughts, as well as my words and actions! Whether I have been looking forwards to death and eternity! Whether I have done to others (a most important question) as I would they should in like circumstances do to me! Am I continually endeavouring to inculcate on the minds of my fellow-creatures this golden rule! How far have I done or left undone any of the principal duties I owe to God, my neighbour, and myself! And

particularly how were my secret devotions performed this morning!

Aid of the Spirit.] Enlighten me, O Lord, by thy word, quicken and sanctify me by thy Spirit, and assist me to be and to do what thou wouldst have me to be and to do.

O thou God of hope, fill me with all joy and peace in believing, that I may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xv. 13. *)

May I grow in grace, and in the knowledge [and love] of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. iii. 18.)

“May I be a blessing;” (Gen. xii. 2.) be blessed by thee, O God; and so be a blessing to others, especially in spiritual things.

May I be enabled to keep every good resolution I make, by the powerful and promised aid of the Holy Spirit, which is equally as necessary for the daily support of my soul, as bread is for the daily support of my body. (Luke xi. 13.)

Important petitions.] 1. May I set thee, O Lord, always before me; (Ps. xvi. 8.) and endeavour to think, speak, and act as in thy sight; for “thou, God, seest me.” (Gen. xvi. 13.)

2. Strengthen my faith in thy promises, O Lord, that I may be comforted in the thought, that thou art my God, my Father, and my Friend, ever present, able, and willing to help me; to hear my petitions, and to answer them in the time and manner thou knowest to be really best for my final good.

3. Intercede for me, O Lord Christ, as thou didst for Peter, that my faith fail not; especially in the hour of death. (Luke xxii. 32.)

4. May I be supported in life, and in death, by a comfortable sense of pardon; by an increasing

* I have destroyed myself, may every sinner well say, but in him (in Christ) is my help. Hosea xiii. 9.

faith in Christ, and by a well-founded hope of glory! (Col. i. 27.)

5. My wants are daily returning, I would therefore daily apply to thee, my God, for relief; happy and grateful that I am permitted to do it, and assured that I shall not seek thy face in vain.

6. I want, O Lord, thy power to continue me in life, and preserve my faculties; I want thy wisdom to direct my paths; (Prov. xi. 5.) I want thy goodness to supply my necessities, temporal and spiritual; I want thy mercy to pardon my innumerable sins; and I want thy grace to assist me in the discharge of every duty.

7. O remember not against me my former transgressions. Enter not into judgment with me according to the desert of my sins, but according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness, sake, O Lord. (Ps. xxv. 7.)

8. Blot out all my transgressions as a cloud, which is dispersed by the sun and wind, (Isaiah xliii. 25.) and justify me freely by thy grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (Rom. iii. 24.)

9. May I for the future keep my heart with more diligence: and so live and walk by faith, that my whole temper and conduct may be suited to my high and heavenly hopes, and to the great and glorious things I have in view. May these things be my delight; and do thou, O God, work in me by thy grace, with me by thy blessing, and by me as an instrument.

10. Give me, O Lord, more grace, more faith, more love, more zeal for thy glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures. May I be daily more and more acquainted with thee, my God, and be at peace; that thereby good may come unto me, (Job xxii. 21.) and that so I may obtain that solid peace, which the world can neither give, nor take away.

11. May I consider my daily devotion as the most delightful as well as the most needful part of my daily business, and the privilege of prayer as my greatest comfort.

12. Enable me, O Lord, to "continue in prayer, " and watch in the same with thanksgiving;" (Col. iv. 2.) watch especially against a formal manner of prayer, or an unjustifiable omission of it.

13. May I watch and pray, as my Lord and Master has enjoined me, that I enter not into temptation of any kind; and particularly that I may never be tempted to leave off prayer; but that I may so pray, as to pray Christianity into my heart.

14. May I delight in the law of the Lord, and meditate in it day and night. (Ps. i. 2.)

15. " Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, " O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Ps. xix. 14.)

16. May I carry the thought of death with me (especially as I may possibly die this year) wherever I go. May I carry it into my closet, into my family, into my business, and into the house of God; and endeavour to hear, pray, and receive the Lord's supper, as a dying creature. May I encourage this thought when I lie down at night, and awake in the morning. May I live in the constant practice of this, lest that day come upon me unawares; (Luke xxi. 34.) and may God be my helper!

17. Enable me, O Lord, to discern the true state of my soul. Prepare me to meet thee, my God. (Amos iv. 12.) Remove from me the slavish fear of death; and so strengthen me and dispose my heart, that I may die glorifying thee, and benefiting those who may then be about me.

18. May my soul be nourished by those truths, which I have committed to memory, or to writing.

19. I beseech thee to hear me, good Lord, to

forgive the iniquities (or imperfections) of my holy things, (Exod. xxviii. 38.) and finally to receive me into thine heavenly kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

A short prayer to be used by one who is sick, for a blessing on the medicines he is taking.*

O LORD, as my help and trust are in thee, and as without thee all man's endeavours are vain, give thy blessing to this medicine, and all the other means which I am now using for my ease and recovery; and (if it be thy blessed will) make whatever I take or do so essential for that end, that I may live, be an instrument of thy glory, and better prepared, than I now am, for the coming of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A night prayer to be committed to memory, and used by the sick (or others) who are apt to continue long awake.

GREAT God, "the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day." "Thou art about my path, and my bed, and art acquainted with all my ways and thoughts." Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3.

When thou keepest mine eyes waking, I desire to lift them up to thee, the Father of light; to remember thee on my bed, and to meditate on thee in the night-watches. I beseech thee to make thy face shine on thy servant, to gild the present dark

* It is said of Asa, king of Judah, "that in his disease he sought not the Lord, but the physicians only," 2 Chron. xvi. 12. He is not censured for having recourse to the skill of physicians; but for placing his sole dependence on them, whom he should have considered as instruments in God's hands, who alone can give success to any means employed for a recovery of the sick. This prayer therefore is of great importance, and any minister, or others, who attend a sick person, should exhort him to a conscientious observance of it: especially in these degenerate times, when, alas! it is so much neglected.

scene, to compose my mind, and to banish every fear from it: and may "my thoughts and reflections on myself instruct me in the night season," when others are asleep.

I desire to recollect and acknowledge thy constant care and goodness to me by day and night. I would commune with my own heart on my bed, and renew my sincere repentance for all my sins; for which I might justly have been banished to eternal darkness and misery.

I desire to look unto Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, who endured the cross for my sake, and trust in him, who is able to save to the uttermost. I solemnly give up myself to thy service and disposal, and desire humbly to acquiesce in every painful and disagreeable circumstance. I lift up my heart in grateful acknowledgment for all thy patience with me, and goodness to me.

Support me, gracious Father, under every burden and infirmity: when I walk in darkness, be thou a light about me: animate and comfort me with the views of that better world, where there is no light or darkness, but "the Lord shall be an everlasting light to his faithful servants, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." Isaiah lx. 20.

And O that I may learn from my own feelings how to pity the sick and afflicted; those who have painful days and sleepless nights; those whose age and infirmities cause their days and nights to pass heavily on; and those who are under any kind of distress or trial: and may all the sufferings of the present life work out for them, and for me, the most solid, substantial, and lasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Night meditations for those who may then continue long awake.

☞ As wearisome nights are appointed to many, (Job vii. 4.) especially in sickness, they may profitably and comfortably beguile the tedious hours, like David, who, during the darkness and silence of the night, was frequently employed in devout meditation, and in communing with God and his own heart. [See Ps. iv. 4. xvi. 7. lxiii. 6. cxix. 55.] The proper subjects of nocturnal meditation, which present to those who have been accustomed to it, are innumerable. But as many are incapable of suggesting to themselves suitable materials for so important a purpose, the following meditations may be acceptable and useful, if they wish to employ their night thoughts religiously, when they cannot compose themselves to sleep.

1. *Meditation when laid down in bed.* Creating darkness, and forming light, are the effects of God's power and goodness. The sable curtains of the night are now drawn; and nature seems hushed in silence, whilst many retire from labour to sleep. Often have I experienced this blessing. I have laid down in safety, slept, awaked, and beheld the light of the morning, for God has preserved me. But, because I have frequently been indulged with this blessing, shall I conclude this succession of the morning to the night will always continue? This night may possibly (though not very probably) be my last: I may never behold another morning: I may open my eyes in a world of endless day, or of perpetual night. What is my true state? Am I a Christian indeed? Grant, O Lord, that, if I awake no more in this world, I may awake in thy likeness, and be for ever with thee!

2. *Meditation on waking out of sleep.* Sleep is undoubtedly a blessing. The senses seem over-

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whelmed, and the powers of reason suspended. -I am like one raised from a state of death. "Each night we die, each morn are born anew." Death therefore is justly compared to sleep. Blessed are they who sleep in Jesus. (1 Thess. iv. 14.) I now behold the morning light. What are the duties which I should (if able) attend this day? The business of the world calls for my attendance. Man is formed for action. Our first parents in Paradise were placed there not to live in idleness, but to cultivate that beautiful garden, in which they resided. May I then attend with cheerfulness and diligence to the business of the advancing day. May God amidst all the dangers of it defend me; may integrity and uprightness preserve me; and may I, whilst I am diligent in business, be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

3. *Meditation on waking in pain or sickness.* How uncertain is this world, and all the enjoyments of it! I laid myself down to rest free from pain or sickness. But how different is it with me now I awake! I am now exercised with great pain. Think, O my soul, of that dreadful state, in which all they will be, who from the sleep of death shall awake in pain intolerable and endless! What are the pains (or sickness) I now feel, compared with my deserts! Let me think on the reason I have for patience and submission to the will of God. "Shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" (Lam. iii. 39.) What are these pains, compared with what I might feel! What are these pains, compared with what will be felt by all who live and die under the power and guilt of sin! Grant, O Lord, that the pain which I now feel may be removed: but if it be thy pleasure that it should continue, may I bear it with patience, and may it be the means of preparing me for that world of happiness, where there is no sickness, nor pain, no sin, nor sorrow,

but perfect holiness and uninterrupted happiness.

4. *Meditation in the darkness of the night.* What darkness now surrounds me! No object is visible. How gloomy! how dismal the scene! This seems a resemblance of the state of the world as sinners against God. Affliction and distress are the consequences of sin. Without the light of the Gospel men live in darkness, and see not the way which leads to happiness. They seek for it in the things of the world, but seek for it in vain. Unhappy the state of those, who are thus improperly seeking rest, but find none: there is no rest for the soul but in God, whose favour is the chief good, for in his favour there is life. Unhappy therefore must be the state of those who are employed in works of darkness! "They live without God in the world:" they have no pleasing prospects beyond this world: darkness, eternal darkness is before them. The light of the actual sun, which dispels the darkness of the night, and brings the light of day, is a blessing to the world: but O how great the blessing of the light of the Gospel, which discovers to us the nature of salvation, and the way in which it may be obtained. Grant, O Lord, that whilst I enjoy this light, I may improve it to thy glory, to my own advantage, and be at length received into the world of endless light and joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5. *Meditation in a stormy night.* The wind blows, the rain descends, or lightnings flash, and peals of thunder roll. How greatly am I favoured by Providence, that I have an habitation, in which I find a shelter from this storm, whilst many of my fellow-creatures (some of them much better than myself) are exposed to the inclemency of it. It is said of Christ in prophecy, that "he shall be an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the

“tempest.” (Isai. xxxii. 2.) How important is real religion! The time draws near, when God will come with darkness, blackness, and an horrible tempest, and when fire and brimstone shall be rained down on all who disobey God, and make light of the Gospel. How terrible that day! May I now be found walking in the ways prescribed by Christ! May I be really united to him, as a living branch in the vine! and may I be found in him at death. In him only there is any shelter from the storms of divine vengeance, which will fall on a guilty world.

6. *Meditation on the shortness of life.* Life, how short! It is but a span; and like the flower of the field, which soon fades away; or like a fleeting shadow. Yet what folly is there in the heart of man! How they presume on long life, and are pleased with anticipating the pleasures of it, or are distressed with the anticipation of the troubles of it. But how amazing is it, that, though life is so short, men should take so much pains to make it shorter! Great numbers shake the glass of life, as if its sands were not falling fast enough. Is not this the case with every one who is intemperate, and with those who follow the lusts of the flesh? Unhappy are all such. They are to appearance built for fourscore or an hundred years, yet is their constitution soon sapped, and they sink by their own guilt before the noon of life.

7. *Meditation on the certainty of death.* “There is a time to be born, and a time to die.” (Eccles. iii. 2.) Though I may now be in health, yet I know not how soon I may be arrested by sickness, and be seized with the pangs of death. That awful time will surely come. Though death may in my own apprehension have been nearer to me than at present; yet in reality I never was so near to death as at the present moment. Every beating pulse makes the number less. May I realize this scene,

and be prepared for it by dying daily to sin, and by living daily to righteousness. Our Lord has warned us to "take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts should be overcharged with the cares of this life, and so the day come upon us unawares." (Luke xxi. 34.) Help me, O Lord, to read thy word with diligence and understanding, so that, when death shall be commissioned to deprive me of life, I may neither be surprised nor alarmed, like those who have put this time far from them, and paid no attention to a preparation for it.

8. *Meditation on the consequence of death.* Death separates the soul from the body. The body remains an inactive, lifeless lump of clay; and, however beautiful it once was, it becomes offensive even to those to whom it was most dear. They are compelled to say, (as Abraham said of the once beautiful Sarah,) "Bury the dead out of my sight." (Gen. xxiii. 4.) This body of mine, now warm in bed, must soon be cold as clay; laid in the dark grave; become food for worms; and moulder into its original dust. But the soul, the immortal part of man, is not destroyed by death. It lives. Who can say what scenes will open upon the soul when separated from the body? It lives; and is susceptible of joy, or sorrow. Grand and glorious must that day be, when the last trumpet shall sound, and the bodies, which have been laid in the grave, shall arise, and be re-united to the souls which resided in them while on earth.

9. *Meditation on the future judgment.* The dead shall be raised: the whole world shall appear before God. What an assembly will this be! Every individual must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The books shall be opened. Every character will then be examined, that "every man may receive according to that which he hath done in the body, whether it be good or bad."

(2 Cor. v. 10.) The secrets of all hearts will then be discovered, and every circumstance of life be brought to light. The Judge cannot be deceived. He will judge a righteous sentence, which will be decisive. O how awful this scene ! How will the wicked and ungodly then appear ! May I then be found with those who have believed in Christ, and obeyed his Gospel : and if I am, (which God of his infinite mercy grant,) I shall then hear the Judge pronounce this blessing on me, as well as on them, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." But how terrible, how shocking the sentence, which will then be pronounced against the wicked, " Depart, ye cursed !" From whom ? From the presence of God, from Christ, from the spirits of just men made perfect, and for ever. " Depart, ye cursed !" Where ? " Into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Ah ! what an abode ! An abode of misery, from whence there is no redemption.

4.

The custom of choosing night texts recommended.

Here I would recommend (which is the laudable custom of some serious Christians) the choice of a short text of Scripture every night for a subject of meditation in bed : and to be occasionally recollected the following day ; which may be done without interrupting the common business of life. By the constant observation of this custom, 365 texts will be treasured up in the memory every year.

Important ejaculations, some of which either the sick, or others, may choose for frequent use, as best suits them.

1. **MAY** my heart be habitually ascending to heaven !

2. May I thank God for all his mercies ; particularly for the grace he has given me now to pray

to him, and for his preservation of me the past night, [or day.]

3. May I set the Lord now and always before me; (Ps. xvi. 8.) for thou God seest me. (Gen. xvi. 13.)

4. May I be serious and faithful, and on every proper opportunity endeavour to edify others. (Ephes. iv. 29.)

5. Help me, O Lord, to do every day's spiritual work in its day, and every week's spiritual work in its week, so that I may have only the work of dying to do at last.

6. May I be found at death repenting, believing, renouncing all self-confidence, and looking for the mercy of our "Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude, verse 21.)

7. Forgive, O Lord, my having sinned against heaven, and before thee.

8. I plead thy promises, O God, to pardon all who truly repent: (Isai. lv. 7.) I plead thy goodness, O Lord, and willingness to forgive: (Ps. lxxxvi. 5.) I plead the merits and propitiation of my Advocate Jesus Christ the righteous for all my sins: (1 John ii. 1, 2.)

9. May I love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength! (Mark xii. 30.)

10. Not my will, but thine be done. The cup which my heavenly Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John xviii. 11.) May my own will be subdued by the love of God!

11. May I live by the faith of the Son of God! (Gal. ii. 20.)

12. May it be my constant endeavour to do unto others as I would they should do unto me; (Matt. vii. 12.) and to promote the observance of this important rule, as much as in me lies!

13. Be unto me, O Lord, a present help in this and every other time of trouble. (Ps. xlv. 1.)

14. Prepare me for thy whole will concerning me. May thy grace be sufficient for me under every trial. (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

15. May I always be prepared to die; and may my fears of death be daily lessening, and my faith in Christ increasing!

16. Whether I live, may I live unto the Lord; or whether I die, may I die unto the Lord; whether therefore I live, or die, may I be the Lord's. (Rom. xiv. 8.)

☞ By ejaculatory (or sudden) prayer we offer up short petitions on every occasion in the midst of our worldly employments, or on our beds; and this is equally as acceptable in the sight of God, as the more enlarged and solemn manner of prayer, if offered up according to his will, and with a believing regard to Christ.

A prayer to be used with one who is sick, at the beginning of any sickness, and which may be used also during its continuance.

From Mr. Kettlewell.

ALMIGHTY and most righteous Lord God, in whose hands are the appointments of life and death, we humbly beseech thee to give this our sick brother grace to consider, that his sickness is of thy sending, and to acknowledge the justice as well as the mercy of thy visitation, and his sufferings. May he look up to thee for strength to bear, and grace to profit by it. It comes, O Lord, as punishment for his sins, which is to make him see, feel, and avoid them; as thy medicine to cure his spiritual diseases; and as his fiery trial, which is to prove him, and purge away his dross. Let it not fail, O Lord, in answering these gracious purposes. Bring to his mind all such consolations, as may revive, succour, and raise him above all discouragements and fear. Let his thoughts under this

visitation be only those of love and thankfulness, of resignation and obedience, of humility and hope in thy mercy. Give him, we beseech thee, a full trust in thy most gracious promises, nor let him shew any unbecoming behaviour under his afflictions, (which would add to his guilt, if he dies, or to his remorse and disgrace, if he lives.)

Father of mercies, pity this our sick brother, and, out of compassion to his weakness, lessen his sorrows, and support him under them by thy comforts. Keep him always submissive and devout towards thee, and neither impatient or ungrateful to those around him. May thy blessing accompany all their endeavours for his good, and all the medicines directed for him. Put an end in due time to his disease, [or to his pain,] and ~~either~~ restore him to his strength, health, and ease, granting him the mercies of a longer life, ^{but} or else prepare him ^{more immediately} for an happy and comfortable death: all this we humbly ask in the name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Amen.

A prayer with one who is sick, for the restoration of his health.

O THOU Father of mercies, and God of comfort, thou art the hope of all who put their trust in thee. We are now kneeling before thee to offer up our humble petitions in behalf of this our sick brother. Look down upon him with an eye of compassion; be gracious to him according to the necessity of his case, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies in Christ Jesus.

We beseech thee, O Lord, to abate his distemper; to give him ease instead of pain, and relief under every complaint. Give skill to the physician, success to means, and an happy restoration

to his former ease, health, strength, and usefulness in life. We would with thy permission earnestly pray, that his life and health may be precious in thy sight; and that he may yet continue many years to be a comfort to himself, and to all about him; as also a blessing to mankind.

O be thou unto him whatever he wants! And though thou mayest be pleased to take from him any of his temporal enjoyments, (such as health or friends,) thou knowest how to turn them to his best advantage, and so supply the loss of whatever thou takest away. Whatever thou deniest, O deny him not an interest in thy favour and love! Be thou his portion and inheritance, his Father, his eternal and unchangeable Friend, the support of his life, the relief of his soul under all his afflictions and troubles with which he may meet in this world, and his everlasting rest and happiness in that which is to come.

From all the visitations of thy providence may we learn the instability of every worldly enjoyment and comfort. May we remember, that they will one day fail us; that either they must be taken away from us, or we must leave them behind us; but that there is notwithstanding a firm foundation for hope and comfort to every sincere follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast promised, that thou wilt never leave nor forsake those, who in the way of duty put their trust and confidence in thee, and thankfully accept the gracious terms of thy Gospel. We will therefore hope in thy mercy, that "we shall yet praise thee in the land of the living; for thou art the health of our countenance, and our God."

Help us, O Lord, to sit loose to this world, and to the enjoyments of it, and to delight ourselves more in God, and in heavenly things. Let us not think ourselves unhappy whilst we can enjoy thee; nor murmur or repine at any loss, or under any

disease, as long as we are the objects of thy love, and the care of thy good providence.

And do thou give us grace so to live, that we may comfortably look up to thee at all times, especially in a time of sickness, as our constant Friend, and most tender Father, as our life and health, our rest and joy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A prayer with one who is very ill.

WE bow down before thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, acknowledging that we are but dust, and unworthy to speak to thee, either for ourselves or others.

When we consider thine infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, our own folly, weakness, and unworthiness, and our vast distance from thee, we desire with great humility to confess, that we are as nothing and vanity. But thy condescending goodness encourages our approaches to the throne of mercy with hope and confidence, to solicit thy favour both for ourselves, and our fellow-creatures.

We would therefore in a particular manner at the same time implore thy tender compassion upon this our sick brother, who desires our prayers. Gracious God, look down upon him with pity, and support him under thine afflicting hand. Work in him true repentance for all the sins he has committed against thee in thought, word, and deed. Give him a lively and stedfast faith in Christ Jesus; fill him with a lively hope of that immortal life, which Christ has purchased and promised to all true believers; fill him with a powerful sense of thy fatherly love and tender care over him in the most afflicted condition. Bestow on him thy heavenly supports and comforts from above, and give

him patience and submission to thy holy will during this visitation of sickness.

We know, great God, that with thee there is nothing impossible. If thou wilt, thou canst raise him up, and grant him a longer continuance in this world. May it be thy gracious pleasure to restore him to us! May it please thee to save and deliver him for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Direct and bless the means which may be used for his recovery, and make them effectual. Command the disease to relinquish him by thine almighty word, that he may again be restored to health and usefulness. And in the mean time help him meekly to resign himself to thy disposal, and quietly to wait for ease and comfort here, or for everlasting rest and happiness in a future state, through Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life. Amen.

A prayer with one who is sick, on the same day (or on the day before) he receives the Sacrament.*

See page 125.

O THOU God of ordinances, we thank thee for the covenant of thy grace, and the appointed seals of it. We now humbly petition thee in behalf of this thy sick servant, who desires to devote himself to thee, and to approach thy holy table with humility and gratitude. We trust, O Lord, that thou hast filled him with reverence for this com-

* Before receiving the Sacrament, especially in the preceding week, it should be frequently considered, that if we have not a due sense of the evil of sin; if we have not sincerely repented of sin; if we are strangers to a life of faith in Christ; if we are not renewed by divine grace, and have no love of holiness, nor any pleasure in the practice of it; then we are not real Christians; then we can receive no benefit from this ordinance; nor indeed have we any right to partake of it while we continue in such a state. Surely we cannot think, that any ritual service in the Christian church is designed to confer blessings on us whilst we obey not the precepts of Christ, our Lord and Master.

mand of his dying Saviour, with this desire of communion with thee, and with this willingness to be wholly thine. Examine him, O Lord, and prove him ; try him, and know his thoughts. Is he indulging any secret sin ? Is he allowing himself in the neglect of any holy precept ? Let thy word, providence, and spirit concur to make his way plain before him. Let him not wrong his soul by a sinful absence from thy table. Scatter his doubts. Give him stronger faith and love. May the views of a crucified Saviour deeply impress his mind, and a sense of his dying love constrain him to give up himself to Christ more solemnly than he had ever yet done !

Lord, shew him thy covenant, and help him to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

He believes : Lord, help thou his unbelief, and increase his faith. Kindle his repentance, and so strike his heart, that it may bleed at the remembrance of past follies ; and confirm his resolutions, that he may have nothing more to do with idols. He abhors himself that he loves his God and Saviour no better, and desires to be deeply penitent for all his offences in thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty, and pleads the promises for the forgiveness of all these sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Here this prayer may be divided, if the sick person finds his attention deficient ; and after proper intervals, the minister, or any other, may proceed to the remaining part, as follows.]

We renew our prayers, O Lord, for this our suffering fellow-creature. Instead of the bread and wine, and the cup of salvation, thou mightest give him the bread of affliction, and doom him to a place of punishment, where he should beg (but beg in vain) for a drop of water to cool his tongue.

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But, since thou art pleased to call even sinners who have undone themselves to come unto thee for help, and hast appointed this Sacrament as a means of procuring for them that pardon and sanctifying grace of which they so greatly stand in need, he approaches thy throne of mercy, though polluted and unfit to appear before thee; and he dares not but come, as knowing that he shall be undone if he keeps away from thee. He comes not, O Lord, because he thinks himself worthy; but he comes because thou art rich in mercy. He comes as the poor starved wretch to the fire. He comes as the hungry to be fed, and as the sick to be recovered, and the wounded to be healed, that he may be washed in the fountain of thy Son's blood, opened for all uncleanness, that he may be cleansed; and that he may receive of thine infinite fullness all that is wanting in his wretched self, that he may (as it were) "so touch Christ's garment, "as to receive virtue from him." (Mark v. 30.) to heal his sinful sores, and to enable him to serve thee faithfully. Blessed Saviour, weigh not his but thine own merits; for he has no claim to redemption by thee, but merely as it is an act of thy mercy. And, as thou sealest and confirmest the covenant of grace, may he be ever mindful of the terms of it, and come to thee at thy table in so devout and acceptable a manner, that he may return from it with his conscience quieted, his corruptions subdued, his grace increased, and his soul encouraged to run with an enlarged heart the way of thy commands.

Let any spark of repentance which thou mayest kindle become a flame; let that flame be strong and steady, and the proofs of it appear in his holy obedience. O shed abroad thy love in his heart by the Holy Spirit given unto him! Draw him, and he will run after thee. He had rather love thee, than have all the treasures on earth.

ous, and constant; and never let sinful passions any more ruffle and discompose us.

Blessed be thy name for that relish thou hast given us of spiritual delights; for that desire we have of possessing the eternal inheritance. May the enjoyment of sensual objects, after the representation we have seen of a crucified Saviour, and the favours we have received from him, appear mean and contemptible; and may the pleasures of the world never more prevail on us to transgress those holy laws, to the faithful observance of which we lie under such great and solemn obligations.

Grant, O Lord, we earnestly entreat thee, that we may walk worthy of these thy distinguished mercies, and live as becomes the redeemed of the Lord. Without thee, thou adorable Saviour of lost mankind, we can do nothing: without thee, who art the Sun of righteousness, we shall walk in darkness: without thee, who art the Physician of souls, we shall languish and die; without thee, who art the joy of all devout minds, we shall consume away our days in sadness. Remain therefore, O Lord, and abide with us for ever. We shall then be enabled to do thy will in this life, and thus be qualified to partake of thy glories in the next, through all the boundless ages of eternity. Amen.

A prayer with a careless and inconsiderate sinner in his sickness. See p. 26.

From Mr. Merivale.

O THOU Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of the world by thy Son Jesus Christ, what returns of duty and gratitude mayest thou not most justly expect from all thy reasonable creatures! With what reverence, admiration, and love, should our hearts be filled towards thee! Under what a lively sense of thy presence should we walk before

thee ! And how fit is it, that a care to please thee should swallow up every other care.

But how hast thou, our greatly injured benefactor, been neglected, forgotten, and offended by this our sick brother ! He has lived "as without thee" "in the world," though he knew that the world, and all that it contains, are supported and upheld by thee ; and that he is nothing, has nothing, and can hope for nothing but of thee, and from thee. Yet, alas ! instead of seeking after thee, and contemplating on thee, as he ought, how little hast thou been in all his thoughts ! How seldom has he, with a becoming awe, reflected on thy presence with him, and inspection over him ! How unmindful has he been of thy mercies, how unthankful for them, and how unfruitful under them ! That homage, which is thy most unquestionable due, he has unnaturally withheld from thee : and has taken no care to gain thy favour and approbation, by attending to the great business of religion, which is the end and glory of our nature.

Blessed God ! when we think but for a moment of thy transcendent greatness and goodness, we are astonished, that this our now afflicted brother should ever have lived so regardless of thee, and been guilty of such numberless offences against thee. He cannot but be confounded when he lifts up his face to thee. He cannot but see, on the most transient view of his conduct, that he has erred exceedingly, and strayed from thy ways like a lost sheep. What more than brutal stupidity, what more than brutal ingratitude, has he discovered ! "For the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but he has not known thee," the great Proprietor and Lord, as he ought ; nor has he duly considered the vast and mighty obligations, which thou hast laid on him.

Make him more and more sensible, O Lord, that he cannot slight thy mercies without incurring

thy judgments; that he cannot live in the neglect of his duty, and trifle with God and his conscience with impunity. His danger is as great as his folly, ingratitude, and guilt. Thou art a righteous, as well as a merciful God. Thou wilt call him to an awful and severe account for his carelessness, his neglects, his wilful and presumptuous sins, whether of omission or commission. Destruction and misery are in the ways of those who wander from their God. O let him not vainly expect either present peace, or future safety, while he continues a stranger to thee, and in a state of disaffection towards thee; nor suffer him to indulge an indolence of temper, or heedlessly to pursue any such evil courses, as will without faith and repentance involve him in everlasting ruin. Graciously look upon his afflictions, and finally receive him to thyself, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[If the sick person be too weak to attend to the whole of this prayer, it may be divided here, and after proper intervals, the minister (or any other) may proceed as follows.]

Great and merciful Lord God, convince this our sick brother, that if he were to remain far from thee, he must perish everlastingly. Thy favour is the only real ground of security and hope; and this he can never attain without earnestly seeking it in the way of his duty. Pluck him, we beseech thee, "as a brand out of the fire." Bring him, before it be too late, to an effectual sense of his sin and folly; and set the danger of a careless state before him in the strongest light, and point out to him the only way to escape it, even thy Son Jesus Christ, "who is the way, the truth, and the life." Teach him so to think on his carelessness and inconsideration, as to turn his feet unto thy testimonies. May he make haste, and no longer delay to

keep thy commandments. Help him "to seek thee whilst thou mayest be found, and call upon thee whilst thou art near." And may he at length be persuaded "to attend to the things that belong to his peace and welfare, before they are for ever hid from his eyes." Break, gracious God, that fatal enchantment, which has bound his soul to earthly and sensual objects. Let not his heart be any longer hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," but melt and subdue it by thy heavenly grace. Teach him that important lesson which he has been slow to learn: teach him to know, love, and practise his duty. Give him a taste for the pleasures of religion and devotion. Let his thoughts be employed in meditating on the best things, refine and spiritualize his affections, elevate and ennoble his pursuits; quicken his desires after thee, and help him "with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord."

Pardon and forgive, we humbly beseech thee, the numberless sins and transgressions of his past careless life; raise him from the bed of sickness, and enable him to act a wiser and better part in all respects for the time to come, and graciously accept him, and all his attempts to serve thee, for thy mercy's sake, in and through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with an awakened and convinced sinner.

See p. 27.

O GOD, how awful art thou in thy holiness and justice! Yet thou art gracious, and ready to receive every penitent and believing sinner. We now kneel down before thee in behalf of this our sick brother, who has grievously offended thee, and entreat thy pardoning and saving mercy. He has heard of Jesus Christ, and of his merits, mediation, and intercession. He has been taught the neces-

sity of repentance, and of being converted; and that "without holiness none shall see thy face." He is convinced, Lord, of thy right to him, and to all the love and obedience of his heart and life, because thou art his Creator and Benefactor. He is convinced that thy laws are holy, just, and good. He is convinced of the sinfulness of sin, the vileness of his heart, the abominations of his life, the vanity of this world, and that thou only art able to be the portion and happiness of his soul. He sees there is no hope for him, but in a sincere return to thee by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But he fears lest the hardness of his heart, and the power of his unbelief and of worldly lusts, should prevail against all his convictions. O that he may have a heart to love thee above all the world, and to delight in thy holy ways, more than in all the pleasures of sin! May he have a heart to believe in Christ, and to live by faith and not by sight! He has corrupted his heart, but he cannot renew it. He has defiled it, but cannot cleanse it. He has kindled in it a fire of rebellion, but he cannot quench it. He has undone himself, rejected his Saviour, and resisted the Holy Spirit; and is there yet mercy for him? There is. Let him then immediately apply to Christ in the language of the humble publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and be comforted in that gracious promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" a promise made to every penitent sinner, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Here this prayer may be divided; and after a proper interval, the minister (or any other) may proceed as follows.]

Have compassion, O Lord, on this our sick brother, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. He has sinned like a frail and foolish man, but do thou have mercy on him, as a gracious

God. His sin hath abounded, let thy grace much more abound. Christ with infinite expence hath redeemed souls; and that revives his hope. Create in him a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within him. Turn his heart of stone into a new and tender heart of flesh. Fill his presumptuous heart with a necessary care for his own salvation. He sees his duty, and yet has not resolution to do it; he sees his danger, and runs into it. He foresees death and judgment, without coming to Christ, and redeeming his important moments. His work is undone, his soul is unready, and if he die this night, where shall he awake? Thy mercy hath long kept him out of hell. Do thou, O mighty God, who hast raised Jesus Christ from the dead, revive and raise him from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness, as thou hast done for innumerable other sinners.

Lord, heal his evil heart of unbelief, which hath slighted Christ, and departed from the living God. Thou hast left him a promise of entering into heavenly rest, but leave him not to fall short of it by unbelief. Touch his heart with a deep sense of thy love. Kindle in it this heavenly fire. Let the spirit of love fix his soul on the wonderful love of Christ, on Christ crucified, on an ascended, glorified, and interceding Saviour, till he is all love to him who died for him. Deny him not the grace, which thou hast commanded him to ask, nor the holiness, which is thy delight, and without which he will continue thine enemy to his destruction. Thou hast sworn, that thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn and live. Let thy mercy spare him: let thy grace be sufficient for his spiritual and eternal life. Let him live the life of grace here, that he may live the life of glory for ever, and look from his guilt and misery to the merits, mediation, and intercession of his living Redeemer: hoping and trusting in

that compassionate Redeemer, may he smite his breast, and say, with the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Amen.

A prayer with one in sickness, especially for patience under it.

O THOU infinitely great and glorious God, thou killest, and makest alive; thou woundest, and thy hands make whole; thou bringest down to the grave, and bringest back again; thou dost according to thy will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay thine hand, or say unto thee, What dost thou?

Yet righteous art thou in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works. Even when thou afflictest and causest trouble and heaviness to fall upon us, it is that we may learn righteousness from thy judgments, and receive profit from thy correction. Wherefore, though thou hast now visited this our brother with sickness, and art calling him to humiliation for his sins, may he still speak good of thy name, love, and bless thee.

We pray, that at this season he may remember all the past mercies, with which thou hast been pleased to bless him. God forbid that his present illness should make him unmindful of the constant benefits he has enjoyed. How long has he laid down and risen up, come in and gone out, in health, strength, and peace? For these multiplied favours, O Lord, blessed be thy good and holy name; since the smallest of thy benefits is more than any of us deserve, and the sharpest affliction less. For to us, on account of our transgressions, is most justly due indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.

Wherefore then should living men complain, men and transgressors too, for the punishment of their sins? Shall we receive so much good at the

hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also? patiently receive it? This temper, O Lord, is our bounden duty; O form it in us!

And as, in great compassion to us, thou hast opened a way of relief for us under every trouble, (by directing, commanding, and encouraging us in all our afflictions to pour out our complaints unto thee, and to tell thee of all we fear and feel,) we make our supplication at this time to thee the Father of mercies. Be not thou, O Lord, far from us, when trouble is so near. In an entire submission to thy most wise and holy will, we now earnestly pray for this our sick brother: O look upon him in his low estate; suffer not, we beseech thee, his disorder to proceed, and let not his sickness be unto death, but for the manifestation of thy grace towards us all, and may he be supported by the promises of the Gospel, as declared by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

[If the sick person be too weak to attend to the whole of this prayer, it may be divided here; and after proper intervals, the minister (or any other) may proceed, as follows.]

Great God, thou knowest, and thou only canst know, the frame of this our sick brother. Lay on him no more than thou wilt enable him to bear with patience. And, O thou great Physician, (without whom all others are of no value,) do thou direct to the most proper medicines, and bless the art of healing to the relief of his present disease; and in the time thou seest most fit, restore him to health and strength again, that he may have a longer day of grace and salvation, prove more useful than he has hitherto been, and do good in his generation.

In the mean while, however thou shalt dispose of him, sanctify to him this affliction; work in him

deep humiliation for his sins; bless him with repentance unto life; enable him by faith to behold the Lamb of God, and to trust in the fountain opened in his blood for the remission of sins, that, being justified by faith, he may have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Make all his bed in his sickness, and "let patience have its perfect work in him." (James i. 4.) It is, "if need be, that he is in heaviness;" (1 Pet. i. 6.) and surely God knows what that need is, and how peculiar this affliction is to answer the present need, and to do him that peculiar good, which thou his heavenly Father art graciously intending him by it. Raise him up to praise thy name, to pay in thy house those vows he makes in trouble, and to walk in newness of life.

But if thou dost not see fit to spare this our afflicted brother, whom we are now remembering before thee, O prepare him and all his relations for the awful stroke. With respect to himself, if the time of his departure draw nigh, let his heart be comforted by thy promises in Christ, and taste that thou art gracious unto him. May his soul be safe and happy at the hour of death; and in the great day of the Lord Jesus Christ may he be found among those who died in him.

And help us, who are now in health, to improve this loud and solemn call to prepare for our sickness and decease. Let us not abuse our bodily strength to encourage ourselves in sinful security and impenitence. Give us grace always to be ready, by performing the will of our Lord, that whensoever he shall come, we may be found of him in peace, and enter into his joy: that whenever our health is turned into sickness, and our strength into weakness, and our ease into sharp pain, we may be patient under it, and not cast down at the seizure, or perplexed, but feel in our souls those

supports and consolations, which the world cannot give, nor death itself take away.

Hear us, O Lord our God, hear us in these our humble requests; forgive us our sins; and accept our persons and our services, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with a backslider, one who has left off prayer, public worship, and other religious duties.

See p. 24.

O LORD, we humbly implore the restoration of this our sick brother to thy favour, who acknowledges, that to him belongeth confusion of face, because he has sinned against thee, the great and dreadful God, and has been guilty of the ungrateful abominable sin of backsliding. He confesses the justice and goodness of thy laws, and has chosen thy service, as the most perfect freedom; he knows, that "without holiness none shall ever see thee; and that tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, is the portion of all who do evil." And yet, O Lord, foolish and miserable sinner that he is, he has yielded again to temptation, departed from thy ways and from holiness, for the sake of a present satisfaction, and a small and momentary pleasure or gain. And by this departure from thee and religious duties, he has justly incurred thy displeasure, abused thy grace and goodness to him, and hazarded the loss of thy eternal favour, "which is better than life itself."

But, O Lord God, to whom belongeth mercy and forgiveness, we most earnestly beseech thee to have mercy on him. Hear us, O Lord, hear us, and forgive his offences. His conscience reproaches him, and his heart is troubled within him. He feels himself deprived by this backsliding of that hope and confidence in thee through Jesus Christ,

which he had attained on the Gospel terms of faith, repentance, and renewed obedience; and he now finds himself liable to thy wrath, and exposed to thy judgments, both temporal and eternal.

Thou art now correcting him by this sickness; but let it be with mercy, lest thou bring him to nothing. We know, that the "wages of sin is death;" but we humbly beseech thee, merciful God, (who art slow to anger, and of great pity, and wouldest have none to perish, but all to come to repentance,) to spare him, and grant him further time for repentance, that he may finish the work thou hast given him to do, and which he now purposes and resolves by the aid of thy grace to make the great business of his future life.

Be pleased, O Lord, for the sake of thy well-beloved Son, and of thine own goodness, to pardon this heinous offence of backsliding, and give him grace to bring forth the fruits of repentance in newness of life; and so to govern himself in the whole of his conduct for the future by that golden rule, which our Lord has taught us, "to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us." Matt. vii. 12.

Blessed be thy goodness, that there are hopes and assurances for returning sinners in and through Christ, who was pleased to shed his blood, as a meritorious sacrifice, expiation, and atonement for the sins of the world.

O let the blood of Christ (who "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God") "purge his conscience from dead works, to serve thee, the living God," and purify his soul from all sin and uncleanness, that he may find the power of Christ's death in his dying to sin, and rising to righteousness, in having the old man crucified with him, (Rom. vi. 6.) that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth he may not serve sin, but that he may live as becomes the Gos-

pel; as becomes one who professes godliness, and who has by solemn vows undertaken to live according to God's holy word and commandments, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts. Make him truly sensible and always to keep in mind that he can have no hope of that pardon and happiness, which Christ has purchased, but on the performance of the duties of a Christian, which is the condition prescribed in the Gospel, and which we are enabled to perform by the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the means of grace, as declared and promised to all his faithful servants, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

[If the sick person be too weak to attend to the whole of this prayer, it may be divided here; and after proper intervals, the minister (or any other) may proceed as follows.]

Gracious God, may this our sick brother seriously consider, that the Christian life is a continual warfare, that he is beset with many and great dangers, and that the devil "goeth about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," that so he may give the more heed to make his calling and election to the privileges of the Gospel sure. Grant, that he may watch and pray, lest he enter into temptations, or they get the advantage over him; and may he avoid all occasions of falling for the future, (especially by such shameful declensions in religion,) and keep at the greatest distance from those snares of Satan.

May he well consider likewise, that if, after he has escaped the pollutions of the world, and his relapse into sin be forgiven, he shall again be entangled therein, and overcome, that the latter end will be worse than the beginning, and that it would have been better for him not to have known the way, than after he had "known it to turn aside "from the holy commandment."

O God, who didst send thy Son into the world to free us from sin, and to redeem us from all iniquity, grant, that on his prayers for thy grace, and his sincere endeavours, he may be kept from all presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over him; and that he may conquer and finally subdue all his corrupt affections and sinful dispositions, and may attain all those graces, which are necessary for his salvation; that in the exercise of them, and of all other Christian duties for the time to come, he may grow strong in the Lord, and never more backslide, or let go his holy profession, but may proceed from strength to strength, that so "an entrance may be ministered to him abundantly into thine everlasting kingdom," through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A general prayer, which may be used with one who is sick, in any stage of the disease.

From Bp. Patrick.

O LORD, the Father of our spirits, who givest us life and breath, and all things, and hast not thought "a crown of life too much to promise to all them "who are faithful unto death*," we firmly believe, that thou wilt not deny us what is needful and fit for us, both for our souls and our bodies, in our passage through this world to that of honour, glory, and immortality.

In this confidence we more particularly recommend this our sick brother to thine infinite mercy, and boundless compassion. Settle in him a stedfast faith, that "thou dost not willingly grieve the "children of men," but intendest good to him by this thy fatherly correction. And now, since all other pleasures and enjoyments fail him, represent thyself more effectually to him, as the only sup-

* Rev. ii. 10.

port and stay of his hope, and as the rock of his salvation.

Whereinsoever he has neglected thee, or committed any offence against thee, make him deeply sensible of it, and heartily sorry for all his transgressions: and as he earnestly desires forgiveness, so work in him a serious resolution to live more circumspectly and righteously for the future.

Assist him graciously, O Lord, that he may give a proof of his sincere intentions hereafter to submit himself in all things to thy will by his patient submission to thy fatherly correction now. O that he may so quietly, meekly, humbly, and cheerfully resign his will to thine, to suffer what thou inflictest, that he may be the more disposed to do readily whatsoever thou commandest: and may Christ be the great object of his desire, prayer, and endeavours to obtain that salvation, which is promised to all his faithful followers by thy Son Jesus Christ, our Advocate, and the great propitiation for sin. Amen.

[If the sick person be much indisposed, and not able to attend properly to the whole of this prayer, it may be divided here; and after proper intervals, the remaining part as follows may be added.]

Make this our sick brother, O Lord, thoroughly apprehensive of thy sovereign power and authority over all thy creatures. Possess him with a great reverence of thy wisdom and justice, with an entire confidence in thy goodness and love, and with a thankful remembrance of all thy past mercies to him; that so he may better endure what thou layest upon him at present; may ever choose to follow thy directions; submit to thy orders; delight to do or suffer thy will, O God; and govern himself in the whole of his conduct by that excellent rule, which our Lord hath taught us, "to do unto others as we would they should do unto us."

Bless the remedies, which are or may be used for restoring him to his former health, that he may live to discharge his duty with greater care. Or, if thou hast otherwise appointed, accept graciously his purposes of amendment, and dispose him to return his spirit willingly to thee, who gavest it; and with great humility, and a deep sense of his own undeservings, to expect thy mercy declared in Christ Jesus our Lord. Fix his mind stedfastly on the great Redeemer, who has led the way through the grave to heaven, that he may not be terrified at the approach of death; but, looking beyond it to that high and holy place, where the Lord Jesus is, he may rejoice in hope of eternal glory.

And grant, that every one of us in our best state of health may daily consider how frail and weak we are, that so we may not abuse ourselves by an intemperate use of any worldly pleasures, nor overload our minds with the cares of this life, nor spend our days in a vain pursuit after the riches or honours of this world; but may we pass all our time of, sojourning here in thy fear, and live so righteously and soberly in this present world, as those who must give an account to thee, O God, who wilt judge all men by thy Son Jesus Christ according to their works. Hear us, O Lord, we most humbly beseech thee, hear us in behalf of ourselves, and especially of this our distressed brother, through Jesus Christ our merciful and compassionate High Priest, who sits at thy right hand, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. Amen.

Short Prayers, which may be used either in one prayer, or separately, when the sick person is in a state of great weakness.

1. From Bp. Taylor.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, the God of peace and comfort, of rest and pardon, we

thine unworthy creatures, in duty to thee and compassion to this our sick brother, humbly beg that thy mercy may descend on his soul and body. We come to thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, beseeching thee to pardon his sins, and through the blood of the cross* to bury them in the grave of him who died for us, that they may never rise up in judgment against him, nor bring him in the day of trial to shame and confusion of face. Amen.

2. Give, O Lord, this our brother in distress patience in his sorrows, comfort in his sickness, and, if it seem good to thee, restoration to health. But, however thou shalt determine concerning him in this sickness, yet make his repentance perfect, his faith strong, his hope steadfast, and his passage safe; that, when thou shalt call his soul from the prison of the body, it may enter into the rest of the children of God, and be for ever with the Lord. Amen.

3. O Lord, thou knowest all the necessities and all the infirmities of this our afflicted brother. Fortify his soul with spiritual joys, and a cheerful resignation: take from him all inordinate affections to this world, and enlarge his heart with desires of being with thee, of freedom from sin, and of the enjoyment of God. Amen.

4. Let not any pain, or other calamities, O Lord, discompose the order of the thoughts, or the duty of this pitiable sufferer. Lay no more on him than thou wilt enable him to bear; and, together with the temptation, do thou provide a way to escape, either by the mercies of a longer and more holy life, or by the mercies of a blessed death: even as it pleaseth thee, O Lord, so let it be. Amen.

5. Let the tender conscience of our afflicted bro-

* Col. i. 20.

ther, and thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, call to mind his sins, that he may truly repent of them, and humbly confess them; and let thy powerful grace remove every root of bitterness, and in the love of thee, his God, in the union of Christ, and in the communion of saints, let his soul be presented to thee blameless, entirely pardoned, and thoroughly washed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. Most gracious Lord, our only Saviour, in whose hands the souls of all faithful people are lodged till the day of judgment, have mercy on the body and soul of this our suffering fellow-creature; refresh him with the aid of the Spirit of grace and comfort, and supply all his necessities, which can be known only to thee. Let him dwell in peace, assured of thy pardon, supported by thy goodness, absolved by thy sentence, and saved by thy mercy; that, whenever his soul shall depart from the body, it may be received by ministering angels, preserved from evil spirits, and committed to thy custody; and that, in the day of thy coming to judge the world, his body may be raised up with power, to behold for ever the face of God himself in the glories of thee, his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Short Prayers to be used by a sick person, either in one prayer, or separately.

Submission and confession. } ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I adore thee as the wise and gracious Governor of all thy creatures, and the sovereign Disposer of all events. I acknowledge thy hand in the afflictions under which I now labour; and confess, that they are far less than mine iniquities have deserved. May I have wisdom and grace to improve the afflicting stroke of thy rod, and discern him who has appointed it; and though this calamity is not

joyous, but grievous*, may it hereafter bring forth in me the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Amen.

Thanksgiving.] I thank thee, O Lord, for all the accommodations, refreshment, comfort, and help I enjoy. May thy blessing attend all my friends for their good offices to me in my present afflictive circumstances, and mayest thou direct and prosper all their endeavours for my good. Amen.

Prayer for improvement of sickness.] Grant, O Lord, that I may search and try my ways, and again turn unto thee. May I improve the leisure of such a state, to examine my own heart; and may I be led to form a right judgment of myself. If I am not yet a true penitent, discover to me, I beseech thee, my danger and my misery; and give me by thy renewing Spirit an unfeigned repentance towards God, and a true faith in Christ, that I may turn from every sin, and devote myself for ever to thy service. If I am already in a state of acceptance with thee, strengthen, I beseech thee, all my graces more and more, and subdue all the remainders of sin in my heart; and particularly, teach me righteousness, by those things which I now suffer. Amen.

Prayer for improvement of present advantages.] Graciously assist me, O God, that I may religiously improve all the advantages I enjoy: may I carefully read thy word, thankfully receive the admonitions of the minister who visits me, heartily join in his petitions, and devoutly remember my Saviour's death, especially at the sacramental table; and may all I now suffer lead me to reflect on the evil of sin, and on the love of Christ, manifested in those sufferings, which he endured for my sake. He went about doing good: may I, when

* Isaiah lxi. 10.

I have such an opportunity, embrace the occasion with readiness and thanksgiving. Amen.

Prayer for success and support.] Lord, if it be thy heavenly will, (for without thy concurrence vain is the skill of the most judicious physician,) give success to the means employed for my recovery, and restore me to health, comfort, and usefulness again; nevertheless, if thou seest fit, in thine unerring wisdom, to deny my request, "thy will be done." Support me under the most incurable evils; and grant, that I may not think it long to wait thy leisure, who has condescended so long to wait for the return of a sinner. Let me see love in thy rod, as well as justice in all thy dealings; and, while my outward man * decays, may the inner man be renewed day by day. Amen.

For an easy and happy death.] O Lord, if thou be pleased that this visitation shall be a sickness unto death, and that now I must die, prepare me for the important hour; give me an easy and comfortable passage out of this life, and take me into thy heavenly presence, where sin and sorrow shall be no more. This, and whatever else thou seest necessary or expedient for me, I beseech thee to grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord; into whose hands I desire daily to commit my spirit, and to whom, with thyself and the Holy Ghost, I would ascribe everlasting praises. Amen.

N. B. The petitions in this prayer are all independent one of another; so that (were it to be learnt by heart) the sick person might repeat any one of them separately, and by adding to it his hearty Amen, make it a short and distinct prayer, without wearying himself, or distressing exhausted nature by attending to the whole at once.

* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

A prayer, which may be used by one who is sick, and very penitent for his sin. See p. 87.

MOST glorious and holy Lord, my God, with reverence and holy fear I would come into thy presence to pay my homage to thee my Creator. O that my worship may never be the mere form of worship. Help me to engage in religious exercises with understanding, inward devotion, and genuine piety of heart; knowing that religious worship can only be acceptable to God, and beneficial to myself, as it is the exercise and contributes to the improvement of good dispositions in my mind. Establish my heart in thy fear; and may this restrain me from every criminal pursuit, as well as engage me to the sincere and habitual practice of universal righteousness.

Remember not, O Lord, against me past offences, which have been enormous, aggravated, and highly provoking, for the punishment of which, so justly merited, my conscience is sorely afraid: yet suffer not the horrible suggestions of the Devil to sink my spirits into a despair of thy mercy. I am indeed under great fears; O let my hope in the Redeemer's merits and intercession be still greater. The more I have offended thee, the more am I grieved; but the more will thy glorious attributes be displayed, if thou wilt be reconciled to me.

Overrule the influence of my former pernicious example. Prevent the ill effects of all my present transgressions and imprudences; and whatever injuries I have done either to the bodies, souls, or reputation of any of my fellow-creatures, do thou, O Lord, repair; and avert from me the evils, both temporal and eternal, which I have justly deserved. "I have destroyed myself; but in thee is my help." (Hosea xiii. 9.) "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." O raise me up when I fall. Strengthen me that I may stand; and finally beat

down Satan under my feet. May the thoughts of thy justice and knowledge preserve me from spiritual pride. May the thoughts of thy mercy and power preserve me from spiritual dejection. May I ever retain, assert, and adorn religion both in my life, and in my death. Raise me up, I earnestly entreat thee, from this bed of sickness. Use me, O Lord, (notwithstanding my unworthiness,) as an instrument of good to my fellow-creatures; magnifying thy power in my weakness, and preserving me from vanity and self-dependence. "Thou art the God of hope; O fill me with all joy and peace in believing on thee." (Rom. xv. 13.) Increase my faith, and enable me to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer with one who is in a bad state.

See page 6.

ALMIGHTY God, source of all beings, and centre of all good, look down for Christ's sake on this our sick brother, who acknowledges that he is a miserable sinner. Whither shall he fly? Even darkness detects him, and flight brings him nigh. Let him not deceive himself: may his repentance be sincere, that so he may be thine. Send down thy Spirit to sanctify his corrupt soul.

Most merciful Jesus, what refuge can he have but in thee! What a sinner has he been! a son of Satan! He has looked upon the multitude of sinners around him as an apology for his sinning; and the sinful fashion of the world as a repeal of thy holy laws. Thy blessings he has turned into poison, and made arrows of them to fight against thee. The time that thou gavest him for repentance he has turned into folly, "quenched thy spirit," stifled the voice of conscience, and the voice of thy word. How long hast thou forborne

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him, when thine arrows went abroad, and slew many of his less vicious companions ! He continued unadmonished by thine admonitions. He has been unaffected by thy mercies, and his sins at length have found him out to his shame and confusion. Deliver his soul from the pangs of that eternal punishment which he deserves. Look in his behalf, O God, on the face of thine Anointed. He has often imprecated damnation on himself and others ; forgive him these hellish crimes, and let him find mercy. Mercy, mercy, we ask for him, and we ask it for the sake of our blessed Lord thy Son Jesus Christ.

Alas, how hard is his heart ! Strike thou the rock, and the waters of penitent sorrow shall flow. He has (as it were) struggled for his destruction, and strove to pluck down ruin on his guilty head ; yet let not thine anger burn against him for ever. O cast a look of compassion on him. Receive his spirit whenever he dies, and he will be one of the greatest monuments of thy grace. It is an omnipotent action to save the most undone ! Spare, pardon, bless, even him, who confesses, that he is one of the vilest of the sons of men : raise him from a sick bed, restore his health, and may he live to praise thee, and finally be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer with one who is in a doubtful state.

See page 9.

ALMIGHTY God, the Creator of all things, adored be thy power and wisdom, in all the works of thine hands. When we consider the human frame, formed for an existence not only in the present, but in a future state of happiness or misery, may we be suitably impressed with a sense of the value of our immortal souls. Grant, O Lord, that this our sick brother, who is now afflicted with this disease, which reminds him of the certainty of

death, may have such a sense of his situation as a sinner, that he may be truly concerned about the salvation of his soul. Teach him to consider the cause of his present affliction, and the ends to be answered by this dispensation of Providence. Nor let him be thoughtless of what may be the event of it, but remember, that he may, and will be, summoned to appear before thee as the Judge of the world.

May he look on his former conduct, and examine it by thy holy law. So teach him by thy Spirit, that he may see the evil of sin, and truly repent of it. May he examine his heart, and not be deceived with the false hope of salvation, if destitute of "repentance unto life," and saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant, we earnestly beseech thee, O Lord, that this sickness may be the means of purifying his heart, and leading him to Christ, the only Redeemer of sinners. Let him not depart out of this world till his peace with thee be secured, and he be prepared by thy grace for a state of endless joy, through the operation of faith in Jesus Christ, thy Son, and our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with one in a good state.

See page 11.

O GOD of all grace and mercy, look with an eye of compassion on this thy sick servant, and have mercy on him, through the mediation of thy well-beloved Son. He has sinned against thee, yet he has hope, when he looks to thine infinite mercy through Christ, the Redeemer, and to the covenant of grace. We plead for him the sacrifice and merits of thy Son, and the promises of forgiveness through him. He condemns himself, but do not thou, O Lord, condemn him. "Cast him

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“not away from thy presence,” nor sentence him to depart from thee with the workers of iniquity. Are there not multitudes in heaven who were once like him and us sinners on earth? Let thy mercy also be glorified in his forgiveness and salvation. He asks not for liberty to sin again, but for deliverance from every sinful inclination. Give him the renewal of thy Holy Spirit, even a new and divine nature, that he may be “holiness to the Lord.” Enlighten him with the saving knowledge of thyself, and thy Son Jesus Christ. Fill him with thy love, that his heart may wholly delight in thee. Let thy kingdom and glory, thy word and thy ways, be his and our frequent meditation. Let our treasure be in heaven; and there let us daily converse.

Put thy fear into our hearts, that we may never depart from thee. Let this world be crucified to us, and we to the world, by the cross of Christ. Enable us to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Keep us from ever “walking in the counsel of the ungodly, or standing in the way of sinners, or sitting in the seat of the scornful.” Bless us with all the means for our sanctification and salvation. May we never forget the covenant of our God. Help us by thy Spirit to quench the first motive of sin; and so fortify us against all temptations, that we “may be more than conquerors through him who hath loved us.” Prepare us for sufferings and death, that we may yield our departing souls into the faithful hands of our Redeemer.

We beseech thee by thy word and Spirit to convince and convert unconverted sinners, and to turn them “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God,” that they also with us may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified “by faith,

“which is in Christ Jesus.” In him may we be found and accepted, both living and dying; and to him be everlasting praise. Amen.

A prayer with one under grievous pain.

See p. 45.

O GOD, our refuge and strength, who art a present help in the time of trouble, we most earnestly beseech thee graciously to look down upon this our sick brother, and to send him ease and comfort, if it be thy blessed will, in this time of his very great distress.

We acknowledge, O Lord, the justice of thy dealings with him, and that he has deserved much greater pains than he now feels. May he never therefore murmur or repine under any affliction thou seest fit to lay upon him. Give him a meek and quiet submission to thy will, that he may wait with patience till thou shalt think fit to deliver him.

Suffer not the extremity of his pain to transport him into any rash or unbecoming expressions, or cause him to entertain an hard thought of thy providence; but whatever evil, pain, or sorrow he may feel, let him still love thee, still believe thee to be a kind and merciful Father, even whilst thou art smiting and correcting him.

And, O blessed Lord, that he may be enabled to do this, strengthen and support him in thy great mercy with the consolations of thy Holy Spirit, and lay no more on him than thou wilt enable him to bear. We know that thou canst deliver him: in thee therefore do we trust. Sanctify this grievous affliction to him, this violent pain; and suffer not the torment of it to shake the constancy of his soul, nor the length of it to weary out the strength of his patience. May it produce in him the fruits of a sincere repentance; and may

death be to him not an object of horror, but of hope.

O Lord, hear these our petitions for him : O Lord, help him for thy mercy's sake in Christ Jesus, our most gracious Redeemer. Amen.

A prayer with one who is fretful in his sickness.

See p. 79.

From Dr. Dodwell.

GRACIOUS God, who has taught us that we are here in a state of trial, and hast proved it to us equally by the use of the comforts which attend our health, and of the distresses which attend us in time of sickness, give us grace to shew our sense of this by such behaviour under each of these conditions, as is suitable to our belief in this state of trial.

Make us, who enjoy soundness and strength of body, thankful for these blessings, and temperate in the enjoyment of them, and make this our fellow-creature, who is now afflicted with sickness, resigned in his condition, and patient under his sufferings. Cause him to reflect, that this is now the proper trial and expression of his duty; that it is the principal virtue which his present circumstances require, and almost the only one which his growing infirmities permit him to practise.

And, since his patience, though enjoined and accepted by thee, does not extend to thee; since it cannot be profitable to thee, his God; yet, as it cannot but be so to himself and friends, make him to consider his tender, grateful conduct to them, as the proper method of testifying his dutiful resignation * to thee. Let him shew his content-

* See Worthington's Great Duty of Self-resignation to the Divine Will, one of the books on the Society's list for promoting Christian knowledge; which well deserves repeated perusals, especially by the sick.

ment by an habitual readiness to comply with their directions, and to acknowledge the good offices done to him.

Impress on his mind such a grateful sense of the service of those who endeavour to assist him, as may make their services more comfortable to him, and less uncomfortable to themselves. Teach him to suppress the first motions of groundless resentment; to suspect the infirmities of a painful body, and wearied spirits, and gratefully to accept and use the friendly offers of attendance and support.

Pardon every faulty degree of impatience, which may have appeared in him; and dispose and enable him to correct it for the future. Incline us likewise on our part to make allowance for infirmities which we may soon feel; to be as unwilling to take as to give just cause of exception, that by mutual benevolence and tenderness we may relieve and lighten those sorrows, which we cannot prevent or remove.

And accept, we beseech thee, our sincere and united prayers for thy assistance in relieving and removing that sickness which now occasions them. Hear us, O Lord, hear us for the sake, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with one who is wilfully ignorant, and negligent of religious duties. See p. 22.

BLESSED Lord, who hast not only given us the faculty of reason, but the higher blessing of revelation, and by both to bring us to the knowledge of thy will, and our duty, look down with compassion on this our unhappy fellow-creature, who appears hitherto to have been insensible to the highest privilege of his nature, and the most important concern of his life. Convince him of the great sin of his past neglect of so many means and

opportunities of instruction, with which thou hast blessed all in this nation, however poor or illiterate. Awaken him to a desire of improving the remainder of life thou mayest allot him, to a further acquaintance with what thou hast done for him. Make him sensible of his many transgressions against thee his Maker, that he may see the necessity of repentance, and of the atonement made by our Lord for his offences. Open his eyes, and soften his heart, that he may discern and receive him, whom thou hast set forth to be a propitiation, even Jesus Christ; that he may know him and the power of his resurrection; and may learn, that his sufferings were designed to make room for our acceptance, on our sincere repentance; not to justify or excuse us in the voluntary ignorance, or continued violation, or neglect of our duty.

Teach him to acknowledge the sacrifice of his Redeemer, as the meritorious cause of all his hopes, and to testify this acknowledgment not in words only, but in a sincere conversion of heart, and amendment of life, as the only condition of these hopes; and do thou, O Lord, in mercy, we humbly beseech thee, accept of his imperfect knowledge of thee, and late return to thee, for the sake of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer for one in old age, especially in his sickness; which may be used by the sick himself, or any other for him. See p. 62.

CAST me not off, O Lord, in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth "me." (Ps. lxxi. 9.) Assist me by thy grace to repent of all my transgressions, and to reform every thing in my past conduct, which has been displeasing to thee, my God, and inconsistent with my Christian profession, privileges, and hopes.

Support me, O Lord, under the decline of na-

ture, and while my outward man decays; may the inner man be renewed day by day. Help me to be an amiable example of piety; to glorify thee, O my God, and thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord; to be a credit to religion; and by frequent declarations of what thou hast done for me, encourage my successors, and the rising generation, (so far as my influence may extend,) "to follow those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. vi. 12.)

Make me ever mindful of my own frailty, of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and of the certainty and eternity of the next. May neither sickness nor death ever surprise me unawares, and find me unprepared. O thou God of hope, fill me with all joy and peace in believing, and make me to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xv. 13.)

My remaining days I am sensible are but very few in the course of nature; and probably fewer, as I have now so many and increasing bodily infirmities. May these last days be my best days; and though I may wholly be laid aside from active services, may I still in a small degree be glorifying thee, and benefiting some of my fellow-creatures, by my passive duties and suffering piety. "Lord, "increase my faith;" and may that faith be evidenced by a cheerful resignation, humble patience, amiable contentment, daily thanksgiving, and earnest supplications for mercy.

Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,

This is the total sum;

For mercy, Lord, is all my suit;

O let that mercy come.

May I shew in my whole behaviour the peculiar power and consolations of Christianity, even in the most trying and awful seasons. May I renounce all self-confidence; and "when my heart and flesh

“shall fail, be thou, O God, the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” (Ps. lxxiii. 26.) When this world, and all that inhabit it, shall be dissolved, may I then be found to have been a true believer in Christ, and may a residence be allotted me (free from pain, diseases, old age, and death) in those mansions of bliss promised to all his faithful followers by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer with one in sickness, who has lived religiously, and is prepared for death. See p. 39.

O THOU great Lord of life and death, of earth and heaven, the Giver of all spiritual grace, we kneel down before thee, humbly to petition thee for the support of this thy faithful servant now on the confines of death. Thy mercy brought him into the world, kept him from a thousand dangers, and gave him innumerable blessings of life and godliness. Thy mercy convinced and converted him; renewed and sanctified his heart, and formed Christ in him. O amazing mercy, that he is not dying in an impenitent and unconverted state!

He thanks thee for the means of grace, and the hope of glory. He thanks thee for the fruits of Canaan through the wilderness, and now on the brink of Jordan. He thanks thee for the cordials of thy great and precious promises, and that they are now as precious as ever.

He covenanted with thee for eternal life, as the gift of thy free grace, through Jesus Christ his Lord. In his name he claims it. To thine hand he commits his departing spirit. He is thine, save him: he has fled to thy Son's cross: he has renounced all dependence on any worthiness of his own: he comes to thee as a sinner, believing in Christ for pardon and salvation. Let him have his lot among the followers of Christ. He knows

in whom he has believed; he rejoices, that he is in the hands of the good Shepherd: he thanks thee, that, after this long absence, thou art calling him to his glorious eternal * home: but forsake not, O Lord, the world he is leaving: defend thy church universal, from which he is removing. Having purchased it at an ipestimable price, still guard it, purify it, and unite it more and more, till all flesh shall see thy salvation.

Let his few remaining moments on earth be spent for thy glory. Whatever his body may suffer, let his soul be rising "to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Let faith be strong in the last hour. Let him ascend in the chariot of love and praise, and for ever "sing the song of Moses and the Lamb." Even so, come Lord Jesus, come surely, and come quickly. Amen.

A prayer with one in sickness, who has lived irreligiously, and is unprepared for death. See p. 40.

MOST merciful God, who permittest us to approach thy throne of grace, to express our wants, and to implore thine assistance, hear our prayers, we humbly beseech thee, for this our distressed fellow-creature. O reject him not while in pain and sorrow, and when with anguish of mind for sin and guilt he flies to thy grace in Christ. Though he has trifled away the day of his salvation, say not, it is now too late. Thy promises are large and free. Pity his misery and forgive

* See a very useful little treatise by Dr. Watts, entitled, "Death, Heaven, and the Happiness of separate Spirits;" in which he has opened such a view of the heavenly employments, as has a tendency to reconcile us to death, and to create in us a willingness to depart out of this world into the next; consequently it well deserves the notice of every sincere Christian.

his iniquities, through the only Redeemer of lost souls.

If the sufferings of his body seem so grievous, how shall his soul bear thy wrath for ever! O give him repentance unto life! Let thy Spirit renew his heart, and sanctify his affliction, to take away his sins, and to make him partaker of thy holiness. Lord, spare him a little, to make better preparation for his great change, before he goes hence and be no more seen. He dreads to appear before thy bar in an unpardoned and unholy state: renew his days on earth; and renew his mind, that he may live to God and Christ, to holiness and heaven. He has abused thy patience and forbearance, lost his precious time, and forfeited life and hope. He foresaw this day, but he took no warning. He is in dread of his sins, and of thy justice and holiness. O eternity! Lord, try him once more with a day of grace. Cut not off his time, till he is ready for eternity. He condemns himself, but do not thou condemn him. Sanctify him by thy Spirit, wash him in thy Son's blood, and give him such a sight of heaven by faith and hope, that he may willingly die, and come to thee.

His sin hath abounded, let thy grace much more abound. Glorify thy grace in Christ by his pardon, acceptance, and eternal life. Through the all-sufficient Saviour let him be reconciled to thee, adopted into thy family, and be made an heir of glory, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Whether he lives or dies, he desires to be thine. To thee, O thou God and Father of mercies, he gives up himself; and O that he could with joyful confidence call thee his reconciled God and Father! Though he deserves nothing but to dwell for ever with condemned spirits, yet fill him now with thy grace and love, and at death receive him to thy glory, that with angels and saints he may praise

his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier for ever and ever. Amen.

A confession of sin and petitions for pardon, to be frequently used by the sick himself, for his humiliation.
See p. 127, 157.

I CONFESS, O Lord, and lament before thee my innumerable sins of omission and commission; "the pride and naughtiness of my heart;" my neglect of the means of grace, and the hope of glory; the violations of my conscience; the vanity of my mind; the violence of my passions; the want of love to thee, my God, and thy Son Jesus Christ, the compassionate Redeemer; the coldness and wanderings of my devotions; my earthly-mindedness; my carnal security; my unthankfulness amidst abundant mercies; my impatience in time of affliction; my unbelief, and hardness of heart; my sinful conduct towards my fellow-creatures; and the dishonour I have in many instances brought on thy holy name.

These sins, O Lord, I acknowledge; and that I have committed them against much light, and great love. I deserve to fall under the curse of that law, which I have broken, and to be deprived of all the blessings of that Gospel, which I have, alas! too often disregarded.

But spare me, O Lord, spare me: punish me not according to my deserts; deliver me from those dreadful evils, to which I have exposed myself by sinning against thee. Mercifully receive this my confession; grant me true repentance; assist me by thy Holy Spirit; and bring me at length to those mansions of bliss promised to every sincere believer in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for one who is seemingly past all hopes of recovery. See p. 83, 106.

O THOU, who art "the God of our lives, and "the length of our days," (Deut. xxx. 30.) the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of men, and the ever-present Helper of those who put their trust in thee, look with an eye of compassion on this our afflicted brother, (or sister,) who appears to be drawing nigh to the borders of eternity. Be gracious unto him according to the necessity of his case, and the multitude of thy tender mercies in Christ Jesus. In the closing scenes of his life place him under thine almighty arm of defence, and support. Ease his dying bed; enlighten the dark "valley of the shadow of death;" give him the inward comforts arising from the fundamental truths of the Gospel, its merciful invitations, and the glorious prospect it opens to our view, terminating in eternal life. Enable him to overcome the sharpness of death, and render his passage from this world to the next not only safe, but as little painful as the nature of the disease and other circumstances will permit. Let death, so dreadful to many, appear to him as a friendly messenger, to introduce his soul into the habitations of the blessed.

What follows between the crotchets may be added or omitted, as occasion may require.

[Forgive him, gracious God, that he has no better answered his obligations; that he has no better improved his time and advantages; that he has so little studied thy will and thy glory; and that he has been so careless in the performance of the duties of his various connections and relations; that he has so little promoted the goodness and happiness of his fellow-creatures, and that he has been so negligent in the requisite improvements he ought daily to have made in religious habits, and

an heavenly temper. Spare him, O Lord, spare him, notwithstanding his aggravated sins, and avert from him the judgments he has so justly deserved.]

Be thou "his strong hold and resort" while in this world, and his eternal portion in the next; so that, whenever thou shalt be pleased to remove him hence, he may have some hope through the means of grace of dwelling with thee in glory everlasting, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, Redeemer, and Advocate. Amen.

A prayer to be used with a dying person.

See page 112.

GREAT God, thou livest for ever, but we are all dying creatures: we have no power over our own lives to retain our spirits when demanded by thee: our breath is in thine hand; and thou dost whatever pleaseth thee in heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. Thou hast brought down this our brother to the gates of death, "to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah xiv. 15.) Thou we know art also able to raise him up, and to restore him to life; but as thou seemest to take away all hope of longer life on earth, we resign him to thee, our God, to do with him what seemest good in thy sight: only cast him not off for ever, shew mercy to his soul now in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

As thou deniest all intercession for more time, and leavest us little or no ground to pray for his recovery, we beg a safe passage for him, some hope and comfort in his last hours; and when the soul launches into eternity, may it be the care of some kind angel, and be carried up to heaven.

And, seeing every man in his best estate is vanity, that there is no man living who shall not see death, let us all be preparing to go to our long home, that, when our turn to die cometh, we may not quit this mortal scene with an heavy heart,

confused accounts, and dreadful fears; but may depart in peace, sleep in Jesus, and find ourselves safe in our Redeemer's love, on the other side of the grave.

Raise up others to repair the breaches thou hast made and art making in families, towns, and churches; and may we be "followers of them "who through faith and patience inherit the promises *."

Let us remember how short our time is, a vapour, a shadow, which quickly passes away; how sure death is, and how awful eternity: by these considerations may we be hastened to fulfil our course, work, and journey, that we may finish all well. We earnestly pray, that this may be the happy case of each of us, through the merits of our Lord and only Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer with one who is oppressed by anxious doubts and unreasonable fears as to his spiritual state. See p. 28.

From Mr. Kettlewell.

O LORD, our God, we come unto thee in behalf of this thy servant, whose soul is cast down, and disquieted within him, from an apprehension that he is under thy displeasure, and will not be accepted by thee. He questions whether he has not too much presumed on the goodness and safety of his condition, without a proper foundation for it: and for this the sorrows of his heart are enlarged, and he is brought very low. To thee therefore we pray on his account, that thou wouldest be pleased to hear him speedily, and to bring his soul out of prison. Remove from him we entreat thee all frightful apprehensions, all perplexing doubts and scruples about his duty, which will either hinder him from doing it at all, or make him to do it heavily, and with a troubled mind.

* Heb. vi, 12.

Make him satisfied and settled in a right understanding of all good things, and careful in the observance of them; and do thou dispel by the light of thy countenance all these mists of darkness, which cloud and obscure his soul, that he may not be unnecessarily dejected and distrustful of himself, or dishonourably doubtful of thee. Deliver him from all his offences, which may provoke thee to hide thy face from him, and make him so much a stranger to thy peace and comfort; and cause him to be delighted with doing thy will, and to place his chief satisfaction in so acting, as is most agreeable to thee. Enable him to look beyond those doubts and fears, which so frequently obstruct his comforts here, to that blessed state, where there are neither doubts nor fears; and may he derive present support from the hope of attaining to it, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with one who is grievously tormented by wicked and blasphemous thoughts. See p. 29.

From Mr. Kettlewell.

MOST gracious God, who alone by the power of thy Spirit art able to cure our sickness, and overcome the unruliness of our minds, protect this our brother; we humbly and earnestly entreat thee, against all profane doubts and mistrusts of thy truths, and against all blasphemous thoughts and suggestions relating to divine things, which either his own melancholy and disordered fancy, or the busy and wicked foe of mankind, are ready to represent and suggest to him.

Never suffer such thoughts, O God, to stagger and weaken his faith, to obstruct him in his Christian course, nor to be by their wearisome conflicts a pain and burden to his life. Preserve him not only from the sin, but (if it may seem good to

thy fatherly wisdom) from the temptation of such conflicts, and from the trouble and sorrow of them.

Yet, if it be thy blessed will to permit these terrifying and blasphemous thoughts to harass him for his trial and humiliation, make him sensible, O Lord, for the comfort of his disturbed mind, that they will not be imputed to him as a sin, unless he yield to the temptation by cherishing such thoughts. Convince him, that in thy sight he is not guilty while he neither believes nor gives place to them, nor alters either his faith or his practice. Let him know that these distrustful and blasphemous thoughts are the sin of Satan, who, to try and tempt him, wickedly suggests them; not his, who, instead of hearkening to them, and complying with them, immediately resists them, as soon as he perceives them, and rejects them with horror and indignation.

O that during this trial he may learn to depend wholly on thee, without whom he can do nothing; and that he may learn to bear with himself, and to shew patience under it, as under every other affliction and trial of thy ordering or permitting; trusting to thy grace to assist him, and to thy mercy to accept him, whilst he is humbly labouring under these trials, and to thy goodness to deliver him from them in thy due time, for the sake of our Lord and only Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer with one who is under religious melancholy.

See p. 30.

From Mr. Jenks.

MOST good and gracious God, thou knowest our frame, and art a God full of compassion, to pity and relieve thy creatures in sickness or in health. Look down, we humbly beseech thee, with thy wonted compassion, and remember in tender mercy the work of thine hands, our discon-

solate brother, thus troubled in soul. Thy wrath lies hard upon him, and all thy waves are gone over him. They disturb his peace, oppress his mind, and make him unfit to use his reason, or discharge his duty.

O thou, who spakest the winds and waves into obedience and calmness, settle and quiet his discomposed thoughts; speak peace and satisfaction to his troubled mind, and give him comfort and sure confidence in the sense of thy pardon and love. Lord, help his unbelief, and increase his faith. Though he now walks in the valley and shadow of death, let thy rod and thy staff comfort him. Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. In the multitude of the thoughts and sorrows which he has in his heart, O let thy comfort come, and refresh his soul. Be thou pleased, O Lord, to deliver him from this sad calamity, and ease him of the load which lies so heavy upon his spirit; and shed on him a beam of thine heavenly light, to scatter and dispel all the clouds and darkness which now rest upon his mind. Direct him to the proper means for his help, and so bless and prosper them, that they may be effectual to promote his recovery from this doleful state. Incline his ears to wholesome counsels, and fashion his heart to receive due impressions. Gracious Father, pity his frailty, and forgive his sin; heal him, O Lord, both in soul and body, and so rebuke his distemper, that his disquieted soul may return to its rest. Raise him up, and make him whole, yea, make haste, O Lord, to shew such mercy on him, even for thine own mercies' sake, in Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

A prayer which may be used by one under great dejection of mind.

MOST blessed and gracious God, who only canst heal a wounded spirit, and quiet a troubled mind, look with pity on that load of misery and oppression I feel within me, but am not able to express. Unto thee do I pray for help, O thou great Physician both of body and soul. Uphold and comfort my weak and dejected spirit; strengthen it against all inordinate vain fears and terrors. As thou alone canst relieve me, so unto thee I pray for relief. O hear my most earnest supplication, and make me to possess an easy, quiet, and cheerful spirit. My trust is in thee: I ask this, O Lord, as the greatest of blessings thou canst bestow on me next to the pardon of my sins: I ask it, because I cannot enjoy any other of thy blessings without it; I ask it of thee, because thou alone canst give it. And, if thou art pleased to glorify thy goodness in granting this my most earnest request, then will I endeavour to serve thee faithfully with a cheerful and most thankful heart, and glorify thy goodness all the remainder of my life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with one who is in a state of despair. See p. 31.

From Mr. Lewis.

ALMIGHTY God, the aid of all who need, and the helper of them who flee to thee for succour, accept we beseech thee the prayers which we now put up for this our brother, labouring under the dismal apprehensions of thine anger. O who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry! His flesh trembles for fear of thee, and he is afraid of thy judgments. He is not able to bear up under the thoughts, that thy "mercy is clean gone," and that thou wilt shew him favour no more.

But do not thou, O God, enter into judgment with him. Make him sensible, that though "the wages of sin be death, yet the gift of God is eternal life;" that thou desirest not the death of a sinner, and art not willing that any should perish; that thou always punishest less than we deserve, and in the midst of judgment rememberest mercy. Set this home on his mind, that so he may be brought off from his distrust of thy mercy, and from thinking his sins unpardonable.

Preserve him from all temptations to self-destruction. Either remove the suggestions, or enable him to withstand them. Keep him in the observance of every duty enjoined. Continue him in the use of the ordinances of the Gospel; and though he finds no present comfort in them, yet grant him perseverance, in hope that at last he shall receive the blessings and advantages of them. Let thy grace be sufficient for him in all his trials and distresses, and bring him, we humbly entreat thee, from this despairing condition, to rejoice in the better knowledge and practice of his duty. "From thy wrath and from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver him," for his sake who suffered on the cross, and there made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Hide not thy face from him, but revive his despairing soul with a sense of thy love, the hopes of thy pardon, and the joy of thy salvation, that so he may be raised again from this state of despair, and may shew with gladness what thou hast done for his soul. All which we humbly beg in the name and for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ the righteous. Amen.

A prayer with one who is presumptuous. See p. 32.

From Dr. Dodwell.

ALMIGHTY God, who of thy undeserved goodness and compassion hast promised forgiveness to penitent sinners, enable us, we humbly beseech thee, by true repentance to partake of thy gracious promise. To enforce that repentance, make us ever mindful that the best of us are no better than sinners, and that we owe our pardon wholly to thy mercy in Christ Jesus, and not to our own merit. We confess, O Lord, we have nothing properly our own but sin and misery, and enjoy nothing valuable in us but by thy free gift. We cannot do good but by thy grace, nor avoid suffering but by thy providence: convince and remind us all, O Lord, and this our sick brother in particular, of this great truth, that we subsist by thy mercy, and equally need in our temporal as well as our spiritual concerns thy gracious and continual protection. Give him the sense and grace to reflect, that he must apply for acceptance in that method only in which thou hast been pleased to offer it, and if he builds his hope on any other foundation than the terms of the Gospel, he will certainly deceive himself. Make him sensible, that it is more easy and more dangerous to think too well of himself than too ill, and that the doctrines and precepts of revelation prohibit nothing more strongly than self-esteem and self-sufficiency. Subdue in him therefore we pray thee, and help him to subdue in himself, every aspiring and presumptuous thought, founded on nothing within him, and defeating every assistance from without. Make him to think and know, that he is "less than the least of thy mercies," (Gen. xxxii. 10.) that he fails too often in known instances of duty, and that at the best he is but an unprofitable servant. Guard him against

the deceitfulness of his own heart, that he may neither mistake in the reality nor in the value of his performances; but that he may "work out his salvation with fear and trembling." Whilst he aims at doing his duty, make him sensible how often he fails in it; and that his only hope is in presenting with humility his imperfect services to divine acceptance, through the merits and mediation of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer which may be used by a notorious sinner, who has deferred his repentance till within a short time before this death. See p. 131.

ALMIGHTY God, and merciful Father of the spirits of all flesh, graciously hear, I beseech thee, the penitent supplication of a miserable sinner, deeply sensible of his guilt and wretchedness; and now humbly desirous of casting himself on thy mercy through thy blessed Son Jesus Christ, who by his bitter sufferings and death has atoned thy awful justice, and opened a new and living way to thy favour in behalf of all such as with truly contrite hearts desire to return to thee.

I have sinned with grievous aggravation; have not only offended thy justice, and dared thy avenging power, but have abused thy goodness, slighted the gracious calls of thy providence and Gospel, and shamefully indulged the corruptions of my own heart, to the great dishonour of thy holy name, and the injury of my fellow-creatures. My guilt is too great for me to express, and such as no created power can remove; and I confess the righteousness of the sentence, which appoints me to suffer from thy justice the pains of everlasting punishment.

But, O Lord most merciful, thou hast graciously declared, "there is forgiveness with thee;" that thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but

“that he should repent and live;” that thy Son Jesus Christ not only died for sinners, even the chief of sinners, but also that he now liveth at thy right hand to make intercession for them, that they may be brought to repentance; and so, returning unto thee with unfeigned sorrow for their past offences, with a lively faith in him, and with a sincere endeavour after obedience to thy will, they may be forgiven and admitted to the enjoyment of eternal life.

Encouraged by this most gracious goodness, I would fain look up to thy offended Majesty with some hope even in these last moments of a very sinful life. O Lord, the most merciful God of salvation, “cast me not away from thy presence,” I beseech thee, but for thy mercy’s sake, in Christ Jesus, have compassion on me; support me in the awful hour of death, and admit me into thy blissful presence in the kingdom of glory, there to adore and praise thee world without end. Amen.

N. B. This prayer may be used occasionally by a dying profligate, or by a condemned malefactor. But for prayers of this kind see Dr. Dodd’s “Exhortations and Prayers for the instruction and comfort of malefactors under imprisonment for capital offences, and more particularly for those under sentence of death.”

Another prayer to the same effect, which may be used with a notorious sinner. See p. 134.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Creator and Lord of all worlds, we kneel before the throne of thy grace to petition thee in behalf of this our sick brother, who has most grievously sinned against thee. He owns himself thy creature, and in thee he lives, moves, and has his being; that thou hast given him a reasonable and immortal soul, and hast made him subject to thy most wise, righteous, and gracious government.

But, O Lord, he has rebelled against thee, he has in innumerable and notorious instances transgressed thy equitable laws, defied thy awful justice, and slighted and abused thy great mercy, which has so often kindly warned him of his guilt and danger, and called him to repentance, by the most tender and condescending motives. Gracious God! he is ashamed of his baseness, presumption, and ingratitude: he confesses his sins before thee with the deepest humiliation. He acknowledges the justice of that sentence of condemnation, which his conscience by thine authority has pronounced on him; and that it is of thy undeserved goodness and long-suffering that he is not utterly and for ever undone, given up to darkness, despair, and misery in another world.

Adored be thy name, that there is forgiveness with thee through the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ; and that if any sinner "forsake his evil thoughts and ways, and turn unto thee, thou wilt have mercy on him, and abundantly pardon." (Isai. lv. 7.) On this mercy he would now humbly cast himself. O most gracious God and Father, let the precious blood, which thy Son Jesus Christ shed on the cross for sinners, plead for him; let thy grace this way manifested be indeed applied to his conscience to "purge it from dead works, that it may serve thee the living God." Grant, we beseech thee, the gracious influences of thy Holy Spirit further to enlighten his benighted mind; to purify his affections; and to quicken his prayers with new and spiritual life.

He desires to thank thee for what he has read or heard of thy mercy through Jesus Christ; and that thou hast so far awakened his conscience, and disposed his heart to seek thy mercy. He entreats thee, most gracious God, to impress it still deeper with these things; to quicken more and more his repentance and faith; and so to renew and purify

his whole nature, that he may spend the short remains of his life in thy true fear, find at the awful hour of death thy gracious support, be at last received into thine adorable presence, and enjoy the blessings of thine heavenly kingdom.

Hear us, most merciful God, and grant these our earnest requests, in the behalf of our sick brother, a most miserable sinner. O hear us for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate, and thus glorify the riches of thy grace in his salvation. Amen.

A prayer of Manasseh, king of Judah, (taken from the Apocrypha,) for mercy and pardon, when he was imprisoned in a dungeon at Babylon; suitable to any notorious sinner, who is truly penitent.

☞ Compare this prayer with 2 Chron. xxxiii.

O LORD, Almighty God, who hast made heaven and earth, with all the ornaments thereof, who has bound the sea by the word of thy commandment, who has shut up the deep, and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name; whom all men fear, and tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne; and thy angry threatening towards sinners is insupportable: but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, of great compassion, long-suffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men.

Thou, O Lord, according to thy great goodness, hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them who have sinned against thee, and of thine infinite mercies hast appointed repentance to sinners, that they may be saved: thou therefore, O Lord, who art the God of the just, hast not appointed repentance to the just*; but thou hast

* The words of our Lord are, "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just per-

appointed repentance unto me, who am a sinner, for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea.

My transgressions, O Lord, are multiplied; and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven, for the multitude of mine iniquities; [I am bowed down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up my head, neither have any release;] for I have provoked thy wrath, and done evil before thee; I did not thy will, neither kept I thy commandments.

Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart, beseeching thee of grace: I have sinned, O Lord, and I acknowledge my iniquities; wherefore I humbly beseech thee forgive me, and destroy me not: be not angry with me for ever, by reserving evil for me; neither condemn me into the lower parts of the earth: for thou art the God, even the God of them who repent; and in me thou wilt shew all thy goodness, for thou wilt save me, who am unworthy according to thy great mercy: therefore I will praise thee for ever all the days of my life; for all the powers of the heavens do praise thee, and thine is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A VERSIFICATION OF THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH.

A prayer with one who is sick, for consolation under this sickness.

GOD of the world, at length thy rule I own,
And prostrate fall before thy boundless throne:

“sons who need no repentance.” Luke xv. 7. It cannot be supposed, that either Christ, or Manasseh, meant that any man living, however just and exemplary in the sight of men, could need no repentance in the sight of God. But the true meaning of it is, that those, who are here called just, do not need such deep repentance, or an universal change of mind and character, as sinners in general want.

Thy power resistless trembling I confess,
In threatenings awful, but in love no less !

2.

O what a blessing has that love assign'd,
By penitence to heal the wounded mind !
By penitence to sinners, who like me,
More than th' unnumber'd sands that shore the
sea,
My crimes acknowledge; which of crimson dye,
In all their scarlet horrors meet my eye !

3.

O eye, unworthy of the light of heaven ;
O sins too mountainous to be forgiven ;
O rebel to the law, and love divine,
How justly God's severest vengeance thine !

4.

But O, I bend my heart's obedient knee,
In supplication, Lord, for grace to thee !
Yes ! I have sinn'd ; and I confess the whole—
Forgive me then, nor cast away my soul !
Save me from evil, from thine anger save,
And snatch me from the dark, untimely grave !

5.

Friend of the contrite, thou wilt pardon give ;
A monument of mercy I shall live !
And worthless as I am, for ever prove,
That true repentance leads to saving love !
That true repentance tunes to praise the heart,
And in the choir of heav'n shall bear an ample
part !

Thus by affliction's deep correction taught,
Manasseh to the Lord for mercy sought :
By the kind chastening of a father's rod,
Brought to the knowledge of himself and God !
Happy affliction, for such knowledge giv'n ;
And bless'd the dungeon which thus led to heav'n !

A prayer with one who is a mere formalist, especially in his disregard to the spirituality and extent of the Ten Commandments.

See p. 15, 16.

O LORD, to whom the hearts of all men are open, thou art a witness to all our actions, and acquainted with the motives of our conduct. Hear our prayer for this our sick brother. Grant, O Lord, that he may not be satisfied with having attended to the form of godliness without the power of religion on his heart. May he see the spiritual nature and wide extent of thy law, which directs the thoughts of the heart, as well as the actions of life. May he remember, that thou searchest the heart, and that they are the acceptable worshippers, who not only present their bodies before thee as a reasonable sacrifice, but who worship thee in spirit and in truth. Suffer him not to rest in any external forms, to which he has attended, but may he now see, that vital religion affects the heart, regulates all the thoughts, fixes the soul on thyself, as the centre of happiness; and, whenever he may depart out of this world, may he be made fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer to be used by one who is sick, for resignation to the will of God.

From Dr. Dodwell.

ALMIGHTY God, who triest me by various methods, as thy wise providence seest most fit for me, I desire neither to be insensible of affliction, nor impatient under it. I desire to receive it as thy just and fatherly correction; to bear it with patience, till thou shalt think fit to remove it from me; and to improve it to the end for which thou hast sent it on me. I know not what is good and

proper for me; but I know enough to see the danger of uninterrupted prosperity, and to be thankful for such warnings of the insignificance of all temporal advantages, which must shortly end for ever. I desire not only to be resigned to whatever thou shalt allot me, but to rejoice in thy choice for me; and to make in all instances thy will my own.

Under thy favour and protection distress and sufferings yield their comforts; and health and plenty are but curses when attended with thy displeasure. Enable me thus to consider, and apply every event, which thy wisdom shall appoint to me; that (whilst, as a creature, I can claim no privileges, and, as a sinner, I have justly merited sufferings) I may, "looking to Jesus," learn to bear my lot contentedly; to enjoy gratefully each comfort yet afforded me; and to sustain, through Christ strengthening me, patiently and resignedly each calamity inflicted on me. "Not my will, but thine be done." May I be prepared at all times to practise this important lesson, and give me grace to practise it at this time, now that sickness has overtaken me. Make it an happy preparative for the more innocent enjoyment of future health, if thou in mercy intendest me this farther blessing: or, if it be thy will to call me to thyself by the progress of this distemper, make it the means of "purifying my heart by faith," (Acts xv. 9.) for the enjoyment of thy glorious presence, through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer with one who is sick, for consolation under his sickness. See p. 50.

From Bp. Patrick.

MOST gracious God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ hast knit us altogether in one body, that we should love one another; and that if one member

into thy hands, as into the hands of a merciful Creator; thus to remain with thee and thy Son Jesus Christ for ever, in that blessed place, where sin and death shall be no more. Amen.

A prayer with one who is sick, for faith in the promises.

See p. 106.

GRACIOUS God, who hast given us many and exceeding precious promises, for the encouragement of our faith and hope amidst the various occurrences of life, hear our prayer for this our sick brother. Help him to believe, that thou dost not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men, and that thou wilt never leave nor forsake those who trust in thee. When he reads that thou hast said, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness *," may he rely on thy word, remembering that thou art able to perform what thou hast promised; that thou art faithful, and wilt perform all thy promises. May he remember, that though men may be unfaithful, though they may alter their purposes, or by changes in life be rendered incapable of fulfilling their engagements, "thou art not a man, that thou shouldest lie, nor the son of man, that thou shouldest repent," but that thy word shall be fulfilled. Help thy servant now to plead thy promises with thee. May they be his comfort in life, and support in death; and may he, knowing in whom he has believed, commit his soul into the hands of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will keep that with which he is entrusted by all his faithful followers, and present them faultless before the throne of his Father; to whom with the Son and the Holy Ghost be endless praises. Amen.

* Isaiah xli. 10.

A prayer with one who is sick, and in great need of sleep.

MOST gracious God, thy mercies in Christ Jesus surpass all our thoughts; nor are we able to number the blessings thou art continually bestowing upon us. How much do we owe to thee for the quiet sleep of one night! and how thankful ought we to be for this single blessing, so constantly imparted to us! Praised be thy name, that, when we would close our eyes in sleep, we are not held waking! Pardon, good Lord, our ingratitude for this, and our many other undeserved and unimproved mercies. Look down with tender concern on this our afflicted brother, whose case we would bear on our hearts at thy mercy-seat. Renew his wasted spirits with comfortable sleep. Compose him to a sweet and undisturbed rest. Refresh him so sensibly, as to enable him affectionately to acknowledge thy goodness to him in this respect. O may he again enjoy the comfort of rest and balmy sleep.

But, O Lord, if thou see fit to deny or delay the blessing, give him patience; and grant, that in the multitude of his thoughts within him thy comforts may delight his soul. If he be still tossed on a wearisome bed, O that his mind may repose itself in thy love, and feel sensible consolation from heaven; not only quieting, but greatly rejoicing his heart.

Preserve, good Lord, the use of his understanding. Let the enemy have no advantage against him, but enable him to say, "I will wait patiently for the Lord, till he incline his ear unto me, and hear my cry." "O spare him, that he may recover strength before he go hence, and be no more seen!" All which we humbly ask in the name and for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer with one who is sick, for a right use of his afflictions.

MOST merciful God, help us to consider, that, in all the dispensations of thy providence, thou art infinitely wise and good. May this thy servant be supported and comforted in his sickness. Preserve him from the sin of unbelief in thy promises, and let him ever remember them to his great and endless comfort; for this is the promise that thou hast promised us, even eternal life to all who believe in thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Help him to consider, that afflictions are common to all men. May he be resigned to thy will, and remember the mercies attending him, whilst he feels the afflictions: may he remember what is the desert of his sin, and compare that with the pains which he now suffers. May he remember, that these strokes of thine hand are fewer than his transgressions, and lighter than his sins, that, "a living man should not complain, a man for the punishment of his sins," though greatly afflicted. May he be comforted with the thought, that "these afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for all who love God a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Grant, O Lord, that he may hope in thee, as his Father, and his God. And, if it should be thy pleasure to spare him, and restore him to health, may he find the good effect of this sickness in his future life, and say, when he reflects on it, "It has been good for me that I have been afflicted." Thus may he become more exemplary in life, be prepared for death, and at length be received into thy kingdom of glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An important prayer under apprehensions of God's displeasure, yet with resolutions to persevere in soliciting his favour and help. This may be used by the sick himself with more propriety than by any other for him.

O LORD God Almighty, my sins are many, my danger great, and my fears are proportionable to both. What will become of me to all eternity, thou only knowest. Salvation is indeed promised to penitent sinners, through the blood of a crucified Redeemer; yet I am terribly afraid I shall never be able to get an interest in it. I have many doubts and many discouragements, which one after another break in upon me.

I am greatly distressed, and have scarcely faith and hope enough, O Lord, to put up a prayer to thine awful Majesty. I cannot however forbear to solicit thy compassion, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I see, alas, too frequent cause to question whether I have ever known the grace of God in truth, and whether I do not deceive myself in reckoning upon that, which I neither am, nor have. "Forsake me not, O my God, be not far from me." "I am afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." (Isai. liv. 11.) I am assured there is a safe and desirable harbour before me; but, alas! at how great a distance am I from it. I had for many years no thoughts about it. I much doubt and fear whether I shall ever reach it; for I see methinks the waves swell; and they will forcibly prevail against me. "Lord, save me, or I perish."

When I reflect on the innumerable sins of my heart and life, "I tremble for fear of thee, and am afraid of thy judgments." (Psalm cxix. 120.) Yet I must and will try what divine grace will do for me. I will cast myself at the feet of infinite mercy. If thou, O Lord, shouldest spurn me away, I cannot but die then; and die I must eternally

if I do not apply to thee. Thou mayest perhaps* stretch out the golden sceptre of thy grace, and then I shall live. But, whether I live or die, I will acknowledge my transgressions, and plead the promises and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, that I may obtain mercy. Mercy, O Lord, mercy I ask, O let thy mercy come! "O God, "the Father of heaven, have mercy upon me as a "miserable sinner," and "from thy wrath and "everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver me."

O thou blessed Saviour of the world, save me from my sins, and all their dismal effects, and reconcile me to God. If ever help comes, I know it must come from thee. O revive my soul with a sense of thy love, the hope of thy full absolution and everlasting sabbath.

Gracious Father, pardon my heinous provocations: enable me to live in a continual fear of offending thee, and in a strenuous endeavour to please thee; O keep me from the evils I deserve, or fear. Above all things leave me not to myself, to the power of pernicious habits, or strong temptations to sin. Hear me, O Lord, hear me! and deliver me from the bondage of Satan, for thy mercy's sake in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A prayer for obtaining the inestimable blessings revealed in the Gospel.

☞ This is an important prayer, intended for frequent use either by itself, or in conjunction with other prayers.

From Dr. Dodwell.

O LORD, who hast not only taught me by the doctrine of thy blessed Son, but hast purchased me by his blood, and by the efficacy of his merits hast reconciled me to thyself, assisting my fallen

* See Esther iv. 7.

nature, and enabling me by thy Holy Spirit to perform the conditions which thou hast required of me, grant that I may ever look on myself in this light in which thou hast revealed me to myself; and may I neither pray to thee in the form of uninstructed heathens, nor in the style of self-sufficient moralists. I come to thee in the name of Jesus Christ, through his intercession, whom thou hast appointed to be our Mediator, and I come to pray, that I may be "strengthened with might, by thy Spirit in the inner man;" (Eph. iii. 16.) and that I may not, by an unholy life, unsuitable to my Christian profession, "grieve that Holy Spirit, whereby I am sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) I desire on all occasions to address thee thus by thy Son and Spirit, and to pay the duty and allegiance which I vowed to all the divine persons in form of my admission by baptism into thy holy religion. I desire to trust my body, as well as soul, to the same almighty protection; and under the infirmities of either to implore and expect that gracious assistance.

In thy holy word I am taught that I was made, and preserved, as well as redeemed, not only by thy power, but by the agency of thy Son, and the operation of the Holy Spirit. By their interposition I read, that diseases of the body, as well as the mind, were instantly healed; and after the separation of these, I am instructed to hope, that they will be again united through the same almighty power. I pray therefore, "that the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead may dwell in me, that he that raised up Christ from the dead may also quicken my mortal body by his Spirit that dwelleth in me." (Rom. viii. 11.) Grant, "that I may possess this vessel of my body in sanctification and honour;" (1 Thess. iv. 4.) and that I may enjoy it in security and comfort. Preserve me by the atonement of thy Son, and as-

sistance of thy Spirit, from all sin and misery. Prevent pains and perils from assaulting me, or remove them from me, or convert them to my final advantage. Grant likewise, that in all events, "my whole body, soul, and spirit may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (1 Thess. v. 23.) to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all praise, honour, and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

A Collect from the Litany Service, for trust and confidence in God's mercy; to be added to any other prayer, or used separately.

WE humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities, and for the glory of thy name turn from us all those evils which we most righteously have deserved; and grant that we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Collect for the imitation of Christ, being the Collect for the Sunday next before Easter; to be added to any other prayer, or used separately.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who of thy tender love to mankind hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Collect for the pardon of sin, being the Collect for the twelfth Sunday after Trinity ; to be added to any other prayer, or used separately.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve, pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy ; forgive us those things, whereof our conscience is afraid ; and give us those good things, which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Collect for support in death, taken from the Burial Service ; to be added to any other prayer, or used separately.

IN the midst of life we are in death : of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased ! Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death. Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, shut not thy merciful ears to our prayers ; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from thee. Amen.

A prayer with a woman, for her preservation during the time of child-bearing ; which may be added to any other prayer, or used separately.

WE beg, O Lord, that this our fellow-creature, during her present circumstances, may be the object of thy tender care. Employ the same power and goodness which have given her strength to conceive, to bear up till the appointed hour of delivery ; and give her strength to bring forth.

Be not far off from her when trouble is near. Make her pains supportable, and bring her safely through them, that she may see the fruit of her womb with joy, forget her sorrows, and rejoice that a child is born into the world.

Prepare her and us for whatever event thou shalt ordain : and however thou shalt deal with her at present, let her soul be safe in the day of the Lord Jesus ; yet with submission we beg her life, that she may be saved in the perilous time of child-bearing ; and, being raised up, may she concur in educating her children in holiness, faithfulness, sobriety, the saving knowledge of God, and in the faith and love of Jesus Christ, his Son, and our Redeemer. Amen.

A prayer with a woman after she has been safely delivered of a child, which may be added to any other prayer, or used separately.

WE give thee most humble and hearty thanks, O Lord, for thy great goodness to this our fellow-creature. Thou hast mercifully appeared for her, and preserved her through the painful hour of child-birth, and made her the living mother of a living child. Perfect thy mercy in the entire renewal of her health and strength ; and, being delivered from her fears and dangers, may she manifest the gratitude of her heart by the piety of her life and conversation. May both the roots and branches be long spared to one another, and the world. May the parents be enabled to bring up their children in the fear of God, to their mutual joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

An addition to any other prayer for the recovery of a sick child ; (see p. 36.) or it may be used separately.

O LORD, we humbly beseech thee, mercifully to regard this little one, who is now greatly afflicted

with a bodily disorder. We earnestly pray, (yet with submission to thy will,) that thou wouldest render effectual the means which are now using for the removal of his distemper; and grant unto his relations and friends the desire of their hearts in his recovery. More especially we pray, if thou shalt be graciously pleased to spare him, that he may live to the glory of thee, his great preserver. But, whatever shall be the issue of this visitation, endue the minds of those, whom it more nearly concerns, with resignation to the appointment of thy providence, and may their souls be profited by it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An addition to any other prayer for the forgiveness of sin, and for power to resist it; or it may be used separately by the sick person himself, or by any other for him.

MOST gracious God, whatever sins in thought, word, or deed, I have this day, or at any other time, committed; whatever duties to thee, my neighbour, or myself, I have omitted; and in whatever instances my temper or behaviour have been displeasing to thee, I earnestly beseech thee to forgive: and may I be enabled by thy grace to be more upon my guard against offending thee for the time to come. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, answer, own, and accept me for thy mercy's sake in Christ Jesus, my Redeemer and Advocate. Amen.

An addition to any other prayer for mercy and grace, (or it may be used separately,) either by the sick person himself, or by any other for him.

GLORY be to thee, O Lord, who dost not spurn sinners from thy presence, but invitest them to draw nigh to thee. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast not left me in doubtful suspense to ask how I shall

come before thee, or how I shall be accepted of the most high God? The way is plain in thy holy word: Christ is this way; who has assured me, that "no man cometh unto the Father but by him." (John xiv. 6.) May I now be enabled, through him as an Intercessor, "to come boldly, "with confidence of heart and liberty of speech, to "the throne of grace, that I may find mercy, as a "miserable sinner, and obtain grace to help me, "as a needy creature." (Heb. iv. 16.) Let me find mercy to pardon my sins, and grace to sanctify, comfort, and refresh my soul. Both mercy and grace are from thee, O Lord, the Father Almighty: may both flow to me through Jesus Christ, the Son of thy love, by the power of thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

An addition to any other prayer, (or it may be used separately,) for one in a lingering illness, which may be used either by himself, or by another for him.

WE direct our supplications to thee, O Lord, in behalf of this our sick brother, who has long been in a state of affliction. If thou seest fit, remove the stroke of thy hand from him, and make him glad through thy restoring mercy. Above all we pray, that thou wouldest give him such a measure of patience as he may further want; and from all his bodily sufferings, may he receive that spiritual improvement, which, through thine abundant grace, shall cause them to turn to his everlasting joy. Amen.

An addition to any other prayer (or it may be used separately) for the speedy recovery of a sick person's health.

WE particularly implore thy mercy, O Lord, to this our brother, who is now afflicted in body. If it seem good in thy sight, bless the means which

are used for the removal of his disease, and speedily restore him to health and usefulness. Enable him "in patience to possess his soul," and to resign himself to thine all-wise disposal. And may every disease which we feel in ourselves, or observe in others, make us more sensible of the frailty of our nature, and engage us to apply our hearts with greater diligence to that wisdom, which will prepare us for death and eternity. Amen.

An addition to any other prayer (or it may be used separately) for one who is aged and infirm.

BE thou, O Lord, the strength of the heart of this our brother, who is labouring under the infirmities of age and declining nature. May the principles of faith and hope give that firmness and vigour of mind, which shall enable it through thy grace to sustain the decays of bodily strength. And, while "the outward man perisheth, may the inward man be renewed day by day." Amen.

A prayer which may be used by one who has been sick, after a recovery. See p. 146.

☞ Has God mercifully restored you to health? Surely you cannot doubt the obligations you lie under to be thankful for it. Shocking indeed, that out of ten lepers cleansed, only one should return to give glory to God. See Luke xvii. 17. But take care that you follow not the example of the nine; for instances of such ingratitude are too common. After recovery therefore, use the following or the like prayer.

MOST gracious and merciful God, the fountain of life, I return thee humble and hearty thanks for having spared me, when I deserved no mercy. I adore thee as the Author of my cure, and praise thee for the success thou hast given to those applications, which were the means of effecting it.

May I remember the chastisements, the instructions, and the deliverance I have received; and may I be enabled to perform the good resolutions I made in my sickness.

As thou hast condescended to hearken to the prayer of so sinful a creature, may I call upon thee as long as I live. Being made whole, may I go "and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto me." Having known the bitterness of affliction, may I pity and endeavour to relieve those who labour under it: and may I never forget my obligations to thee, and all the kindness of those about me, whom I humbly recommend to thy continual protection and everlasting favour, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Another prayer, which may be used with one after a recovery.

See page 151.

O MERCIFUL Preserver of men, who healest all our diseases, and savest us from the power of death, we bless thy name for thy great goodness vouchsafed to this our fellow-creature, in his recovery from the distemper with which thou hast been pleased to afflict him. Give him a deep and lasting sense of this instance of thy sparing mercy, and enable him and us so to improve the blessing of health whilst thou continuest it with us, that we may become every day better fitted to sustain the infirmities which thou shalt be pleased to lay on us; and may we both living and dying be accepted by thee.

O thou heavenly Physician, who hast healed his body, heal his soul also: recover it from every sinful disorder; "comfort him, and stablish him in every good word and work." (2 Thess. ii. 17.) As thou hast given him space to repent, and to make himself more ready for the coming of Christ, incline his heart to improve his prolonged time

well, that this reprieve may end in pardon and eternal life.

God forbid that he should now live as if he should never see death ; but may he possess his soul with such serious thoughts of another world, as shall excite him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength ; (Mark xii. 30.) making God the end of all his actions, wishes, and pursuits : and thus giving all diligence in the great work of salvation, that he may at last be found of the Lord in peace, and may die filled with the lively hopes of more durable enjoyments than those he shall leave at his departure from this transitory scene of things. Hear, O Lord, hear these our humble petitions, answer them, own and accept us in thy Son Jesus Christ, through whom we offer up all our worship. . Amen.

The proper method of using this Book profitably.

AS many of these Prayers are to be considered rather as suggesting materials for prayer, than as set forms always to be used without any alteration, variations may sometimes be necessary according to the capacity, disposition, and state of the person for whose benefit they are proposed.

The *Helps for Conversation and Examination* are likewise to be considered as suggesting materials, and not always to be used exactly as they here stand : for they are designed as sketches, on which the minister who visits the sick (or any one else) may enlarge, add some things, or omit others, according to circumstances ; of which he will judge for himself. I have therefore considered this publication chiefly as *helps for conversation* ; and that by these *helps* some might occasionally be assisted in their religious discourse with the sick or others, and benefited themselves in their retirements by a serious meditation on the subjects most suitable to their present state.

It is not in its own nature a work merely to be once read, and then laid aside, but to be frequently referred to, well considered, and weighed with great care ; so that the readers may become thoroughly masters of its contents, especially of those parts of it which relate to particular circumstances :

Nocturna versate manu versate diurna.

It is indeed principally intended (as I have before observed) for the benefit of the sick ; yet I presume it may be an assistant to many others ; and I should hope, that no reader will be so deficient in candour as to discard the whole, because some

particulars perhaps may not be executed to his satisfaction, or be agreeable to his ideas.

Whoever thinks a faultless book to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Pope's Essay on Criticism

Few, it is presumed, can have the vanity to think themselves exempted from imperfections, errors and mistakes.

NOV 6 - 1958

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